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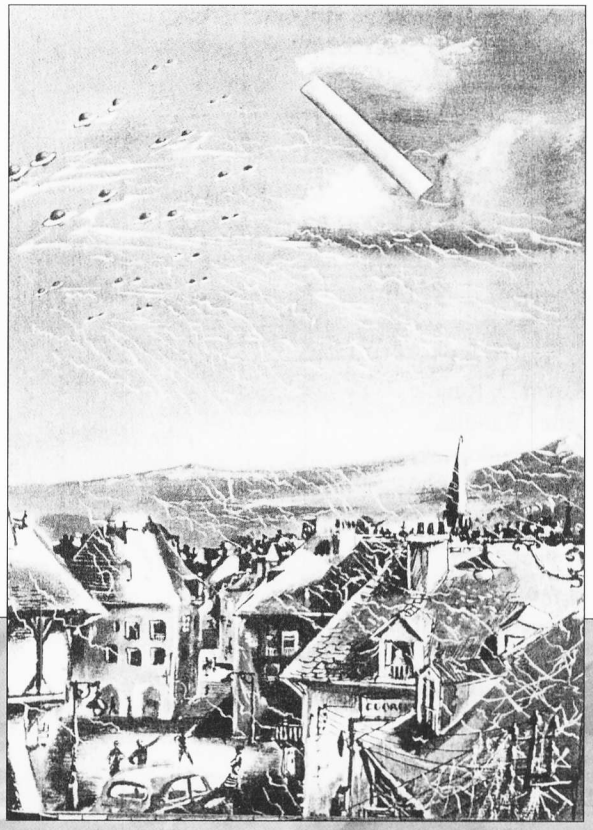
SATELLITE OBJECTS AND CLOUD CIGARS



Multiple-object sightings at Homer, New York, April 11, 1964 (below), and Oloron, France, October 17, 1952 (right).

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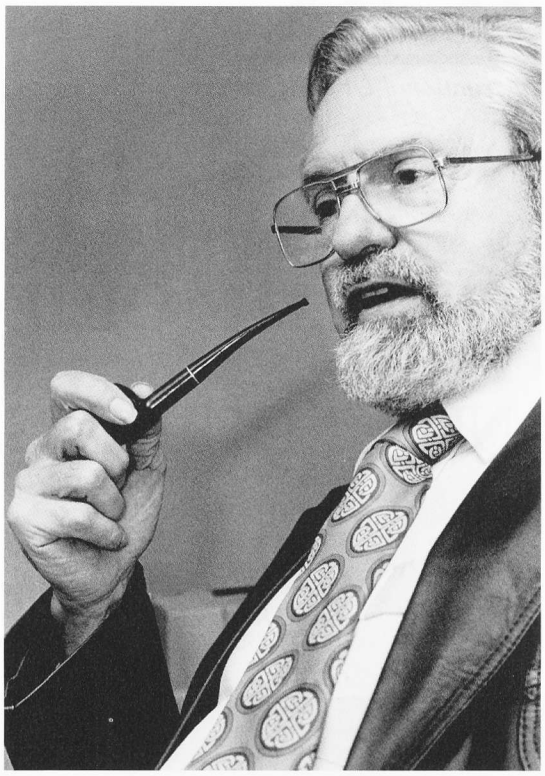

J. Allen Hynek
1910-1986

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SATELLITE OBJECTS AND CLOUD CIGARS

BY HERBERT S. TAYLOR

During a fall day in 1965 a Chesapeake & Ohio train hauling a string of empty coal cars was moving through northern Ohio at about 25 mph. At 10:30 a.m., about eight miles south of Fostoria, the fireman and engineer (both in the engine) observed a large cigar-shaped object in the sky at a considerable distance from them. The sky was bright blue with scattered white puffy clouds, and it was very windy. They observed the object to the west from the right side of the engine. It was "very dark in color" and positioned at a 45-degree angle from the horizontal. Not really knowing its distance from them, they both still estimated that the object was the size of two aircraft carriers.

The object appeared to be creating its own cloud screen, which was most prominent around its nose and tail. Suddenly a small object was seen to fall out of the tail of the object, falling slowly in a rocking leaflike or fluttering fashion. Once near the ground the smaller object stabilized, giving off coal-black smoke from its top. It then rose upward, slowly at first, then faster. Four of these smaller objects were observed to leave the large object, each event taking 10–12 minutes. They went in different directions. After the last object had left the area, a white cloud formed completely around the larger object, which remained in the sky with other apparently normal white clouds. The large object was not seen again. The whole event lasted about 45 minutes as the train traveled through Upper Sandusky.

Source: Ohio UFOs and Others, investigated by Joseph Stets and William E. Jones.

This is one of the singular body of reports that are referred to as "satellite object" or "mothership" cases. They are among the most fascinating and spectacular of all UFO reports, and with them we at once confront the UFO problem in its most striking form (only the better close-encounter reports are comparable in this respect). Though constituting only a small percentage of the genuinely unexplained reports, they perhaps comprise the most important and meaningful category. While satellite-object reports cannot be said to constitute the smoking gun that proves beyond reasonable doubt that the ET hypothesis properly and correctly accounts for the core UFO problem, they do by their most unusual nature prevent the ETH from being dismissed and in fact maintain it as a viable possibility. The only other possible non-ET explanation that might account for some or all of these reports is an as yet unknown and exotic atmospheric phenomenon. However, to explain one unknown with another unknown makes little sense from a rational standpoint; nor do we know that any such phenomenon exists.

Some recurring features are clearly evident among many of the better, more impressive satellite-object reports. These clearly discernible patterns themselves provide a most compelling and persuasive reason to regard the reports as deserving of the utmost serious attention.

One classic pattern shows up in reports of "cloud cigars" or "cloud spheres," where the primary object (most often having a cigar, cylinder, or tubular shape) is surrounded to some extent by a vaporous, steamy-type cloud. Strange-appearing clouds are also present in other reports where no primary object is observed but in which the presumably smaller secondary objects are seen to enter the cloud and not exit. There is a strong suggestion here that a satellite-object event might have occurred.

Another recurrent pattern is that most often the primary object becomes motionless when generating or absorbing the smaller secondary objects (which are most often disc or oval in shape). The duration of satellite-object reports is another distinguishing characteristic. They are rarely fleeting events, with durations between 30–45 minutes a frequent occurrence. Not unheard of are periods far surpassing an hour (and on a few occasions several hours).

One last item needs to be dealt with, and that is to point out what satellite objects are not. When reading the details of the more impressive reports that characterize this category, it becomes manifestly clear that the usual prosaic explanations (balloons, Venus, meteors, aircraft, satellites) that do indeed account for the bulk of raw UFO reports play no conceivable role here whatsoever.

Neither are they accountable in terms of hoaxes or hallucinations. Few reports just involve one witness, with dozens and scores not an infrequent number (on rare occasions, even in the low hundreds). Equally noteworthy is that

Herbert S. Taylor has long been active in serious UFO research and has a deep and abiding interest that goes back more than half a century. He lives in Oceanside, New York.

the very bizarre nature of satellite-object reports renders them invisible to the public and media. Their very special characteristics, unlike the more familiar and well-known concept of a flying saucer, assure that the specifics of these reports remains largely an unknown to society.

Despite the foregoing, with but few exceptions (for example, Aimé Michel and Jacques Vallee, in the late 1950s and mid-1960s respectively), satellite-object reports have somehow failed to receive anywhere near the proper attention they deserve. Consequently, I decided some time ago to initiate a study of such reports, with the intention of eventually making available a research source for all interested parties, both present and future. Though still a work very much in progress, my satellite-object study has now reached a point where I have collected enough good reports to write about them in public forums.

Now we get to take a close look at some of the more notable reports. They speak for themselves incredibly well.

A pre-Arnold cloud report

On a clear early afternoon in late April or early May 1947, two women made a most unusual observation of something strange in the skies over Tucson, Arizona. It was about 1:20 p.m. when Mrs. William Down, who was sunbathing in the backyard, called repeatedly in an excited voice for her friend Mrs. H. G. Olavick, who was inside her home preparing a meal, to quickly join her. Mrs. Olavick did so, and after Mrs. Down told her to look up at the sky, immediately saw what had attracted her friend's attention. Somewhat north and east of the zenith, Mrs. Olavick spotted an isolated cloud of an unusual nature. She described it as very fleecy and yet rather steamy, and stressed that this was the only cloud to be seen anywhere in the sky.

Moving around in "yo-yo fashion" were a number of small disc-like objects with a dull-white finish. Their number varied at times, and they moved up and down and occasionally sideways, and would intermittently disappear into or behind (i.e., above) the cloud. They were round in planform, but not spherical, and may have had a slight bulge on the undersurface. They never flipped and, since they were near the zenith, they appeared as circular discs to the witnesses. Mrs. Olavick estimated that they watched the objects for perhaps 5–7 minutes. The cloud was somewhat oblong, perhaps 20 times longer than the diameter of the objects, and 10 times wider than the objects.

After a while, all of the objects seemed to disappear above the cloud, hidden from sight. Then suddenly, an object several times larger than the smaller objects emerged from the cloud (or from above it) and moved out eastward. Its shape was also circular, similar to that of the smaller objects. Then behind it came a V-formation of four of the smaller discs in a row abreast, followed by three abreast, then two abreast, making a total of nine small discs behind the larger one. When all were in position, the entire group began climbing at very high speed toward the northeast, and disappeared from sight in about two or three seconds, definitely not more than four seconds. The objects remained with their axis horizontal as they rapidly climbed away.

Mrs. Olavick stated that both she and her friend were quite sure at the time that the objects were ours, and that they must be a new type of aircraft belonging to the Air Force that the public had not yet been told about. No official report was ever made.

Source: Letter dated August 3, 1967 from Dr. James E. McDonald to UFO researcher Ted Bloecher.

Cloud cigars in the 1954 French wave

During the late summer and early fall of 1954, France experienced a massive wave of UFO reports. One of the more notable features of this wave was a series of intriguing cloud-cigar reports. Aimé Michel in his 1958 book *Flying Saucers and the Straight-Line Mystery* covered these events in considerable detail. Because of this, I have used Michel's book as the primary source for the following reports.

The first known cloud-cigar report of the wave occurred in the early morning hours of August 23 at the town of Vernon (Eure Department), 40 miles west-northwest of Paris. Just before 1:00 a.m., businessman Bernard Miserey arrived home and put his car away. As he came out of the garage on the south bank of the Seine, he was surprised to see a pale light illuminating the town, which had previously been in complete darkness. Looking at the sky, he saw a huge, silent, motionless, luminous mass, apparently suspended above the north bank of the river some 300 yards away. It was shaped like a large cigar standing on end.

Stated Miserey,

> I had been watching this amazing spectacle for a couple of minutes, when suddenly from the bottom of the cigar came an object like a horizontal disk, which dropped at first in free fall, then slowed, and suddenly swayed and dived horizontally across the river toward me, becoming very luminous. For a very short time I could see the disk full-face; it was surrounded by a halo of brilliant light.
>
> A few minutes after it had disappeared behind me, going southwest at prodigious speed, a similar object came from the cigar and went through the same maneuvers. A third object came and then a fourth. There was then a longer interval and finally a fifth disk detached itself from the cigar, which was still motionless. This disk dropped much lower than the earlier ones, to the level of the new bridge, where it remained still for an instant, swaying slightly. At that time I could see very clearly its circular form and its red luminosity, more intense at the center, fading out at the edges—and the glowing halo surrounding it. After a few seconds pause, it wobbled like the first four, and took off like a flash toward the north where it was lost in the distance as it gained altitude.

> During this time the luminosity of the cigar had faded, and the gigantic object, which may have been 300 feet long, had sunk into darkness. The spectacle had lasted about three-fourths of an hour.

When Miserey described his observation the next day, the police informed him that two policemen on duty at about 1:00 a.m. had also observed the phenomenon, as had an army chemical engineer driving along Route N-181 southwest of Vernon. The case is also briefly described in the Paris newspaper *Libération* of August 25.

Another cloud-cigar event of considerable importance occurred in the late afternoon of September 14 near Saint-Prouant (now Talmont-Saint-Hilaire in Vendée Department) on the Atlantic coast, about 250 miles southwest of Paris. Due to the rather lengthy nature of the account, I will mention just a few brief details here. The primary object was cigar-shaped (some likened it to a carrot) and when in a vertical position it discharged a small disk. After maneuvering over a wide area, it returned to the cigar and reentered it. There were hundreds of witnesses scattered through half a dozen villages and surrounding fields. Despite only one local newspaper mentioning it, a reader informed Michel by mail of this event and an investigation was made.

Yet another very important cloud-cigar event occurred on the evening of September 22 near Fontainebleau, about 35 miles southeast of Paris. Shortly after 8:00 p.m., Mme. Gamundi of Paris left Fontainebleau in her car and was driving home on Route N-7 going north. She had not yet come out of a forested area when a reflection on the glass indicated that there was something luminous in the sky above the car. She stopped and got out. Under the clouds, at an altitude that she could not estimate, a huge luminous ball hung motionless. It was reddish and surrounded by a sort of moving smoke, also luminous. Suddenly, from the lower part of the ball emerged another much smaller luminous ball. After a few seconds of free fall it slowed, turned obliquely, and disappeared at high speed. A moment later another ball dropped down and disappeared like the first one, then a third, a fourth and more. Astonished, Mme. Gamundi forgot to count them and later was unable to tell precisely the number of smaller balls which had emerged from the big one.

All this was happening less than 25 miles south of the big Orly airfield, and it was this proximity that brought the event to an end. About 30 minutes into the event, an aircraft appeared from the north, apparently having just left Orly. It was flying south under the clouds, heading straight toward the large ball, which was still a good many miles from it. The ball abruptly changed position, then rose at high speed toward the clouds into which it disappeared in a few seconds. The aircraft passed and disappeared into the distance, but the ball did not reappear.

One further note about this event. What was almost certainly the same large reddish ball seen by Mme. Gamundi, was also seen just minutes before some 10 miles north of her by M. Rabot, a butcher from Saint-Fargeau-Ponthierry. His description matched perfectly that of Gamundi, though he saw no secondary objects. He observed the object for many minutes before it headed south and disappeared in the clouds.

Some of the other cloud-cigar reports from the 1954 French wave include:

September 27, early morning, Rixheim (Haut-Rhine Department, Alsace). Two witnesses, having noticed in the sky a peculiar elongated, motionless, luminous spot, studied it at leisure with binoculars. They made out "a long craft in the shape of a cigar, around which 10 or more much smaller luminous points navigated in every direction." A third witness made an independent report with the same description.

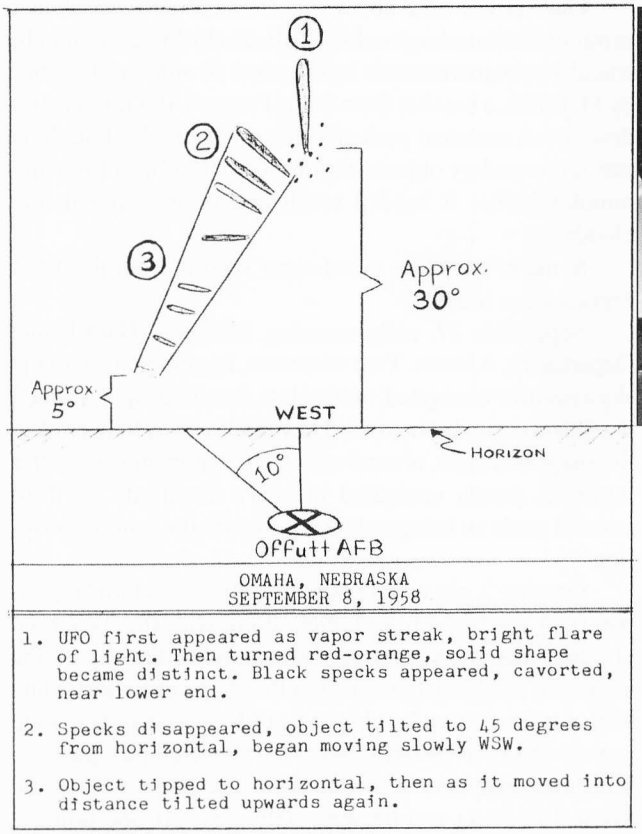
October 2, about 3:45 p.m., Les Rousses (Jura Department). A teacher, Mme. Jaillet, along with the 23 school children that she was supervising, saw in the sky to the southeast an elongated object in the shape of a short white trail or train. At first barely perceptible, it approached quite rapidly and soon the object was seen to be a cloud cigar. The witnesses then saw it switch from the horizontal to the vertical position and become stationary. At one point, a gleaming yellow disk emerged from the cigar. It was in sight for several seconds before they lost sight of it. Then the train resumed its horizontal position and began moving forward again, disappearing rapidly toward the northwest. The whole event took 4–5 minutes.

October 7, time unspecified, Corbigny (Nièvre Department). The witnesses twice saw an object that corresponded to a cloud cigar. It was a kind of luminous "cylinder," with a faintly orange light when vertical and motionless, a strong white light when moving forward horizontally. At one point, two small disks were seen to leave the lower part of the object.

Observation at SAC headquarters

On a late summer day in 1958, a remarkable cloud-cigar event occurred at a major Air Force base in mid-America. For some 20 minutes, both Air Force personnel (at least 25 officers and airmen) and civilian missile engineers observed an amazing display in the sky. The case was reported to NICAP by Maj. Paul A. Duich, USAF (Ret.), one of the witnesses, who was then on active duty. His report to NICAP was comprehensive and was accompanied by a detailed drawing of the sequence of events.

The sighting began at approximately 6:40 p.m. on September 8, 1958, at Strategic Air Command (SAC) headquarters, Offutt AFB, Omaha, Nebraska. Major Duich was crossing an open area between the Officers Club and the Visiting Officers quarters (VOQ) when something caught his eye. He noticed a short vapor trail in an otherwise clear


1
2
3
Approx.
30°
Approx
5°
WEST
HORIZON
10°
Offutt AFB
OMAHA, NEBRASKA
SEPTEMBER 8, 1958
1. UFO first appeared as vapor streak, bright flare of light. Then turned red-orange, solid shape became distinct. Black specks appeared, cavorted, near lower end.
2. Specks disappeared, object tilted to 45 degrees from horizontal, began moving slowly WSW.
3. Object tipped to horizontal, then as it moved into distance tilted upwards again.

U.S. Strategic Command Headquarters, Offutt AFB, Omaha.

blue sky. There were no clouds, and the sun had just set. He had seen thousands of vapor trails, but this one was peculiar. He did a double take when the short vapor trail became a brilliant source of light, similar to a magnesium flare. He stopped abruptly and watched.

The light was intense; in a second peculiar development, the vapor trail hung motionless (rather than continue moving). He watched for two or three minutes before calling it to the attention of another officer, who stopped to look, as did several others. As a small crowd gathered, Duich hurried into the VOQ office and called the Offutt tower operator to tell him what he saw. The tower operator said it looked like a short vapor trail, but odd.

At that point the situation changed radically. Stated Maj. Duich:

> I could see it through the window as I talked to the tower operator. The glow was now diminishing and changing to a dull red-orange and at the same time the fuzzy appearance gradually took on a solid look, in the distinct shape of a pencil or slender cigar. The upper end was blunter than the lower end.
>
> By then all those in the office were curious and we stepped outside to join the 10 or 20 others who had gathered to gape at the thing. All of a sudden we all started checking each others faces for some silly reason—for assurance of reality, perhaps, for as we watched there appeared at the lower end of the object a swarm of black specks cavorting every which way, much like a swarm of gnats. This procedure continued for a minute or so before they (the black specks) disappeared.
>
> Then the object, which had hung motionless on the same spot, slowly changed attitude from an upright position to a 45 degree angle with the horizontal and started moving slowly toward the west. At the same time there was no drastic change in the coloring, but a perceptible color change did take place. It remained a dull orange-red color and continued its westerly movement.
>
> We watched in awe for several minutes—perhaps 5—and then the object changed attitude, again very gradually, until its longitudinal axis appeared parallel to the horizon. The westward movement continued, slightly to the southwest. The apparent size of the object diminished gradually and the color faded. About 5 minutes before we lost it completely (as it faded into the haze just above the horizon) the object changed attitude again, back toward the 45 degree position, but not quite.
>
> As it continued on its westerly path, it maintained this last attitude until completely swallowed up by the haze. It never did drop below the horizon—just faded away. The fading, of course, was due to the many miles of hazy atmosphere between us and the object. The sky was cloudless, but the western horizon did have a slight haze, readily apparent against the bright background.

A full colonel took several color photographs of the object, but he later denied getting successful exposures after Duich asked him on several occasions. Stated Duich, "We concluded that what was seen by all was no conventional vehicle, nor was it an atmospheric phenomenon."

Maj. Duich collected a few names of individuals present, as he intended to notify the proper authorities. In the presence of a fellow officer and coworker he called the filter center and reported the facts of what occurred. He was told that Air Technical Intelligence Center representatives would contact him for an interview within 48 hours. The interview never materialized, then or later.

Sources: Richard Hall, ed., *The UFO Evidence,* NICAP, 1964; Thomas M. Olsen, *The Reference For Outstanding UFO Sighting Reports,* 1966.

Amazing report from New York State

On an early spring day in 1964, New York State was the scene of a rather extraordinary cloud cigar event. The event occurred on April 11,1964, near Homer, New York. The witnesses were Warren B. Ochsner (a physiotherapist), his wife and their two children, ages 10 and 14. The time was 6:30 p.m., and the sighting lasted about 45 minutes, ending just about dusk. The sky was crystal clear, with just a few stratus clouds on the western horizon. Mr. Ochsner composed a very detailed letter dated May 15, 1964, to J. Allen Hynek describing the sighting, from which I quote:

> . . . [we] were having a picnic supper on a hill 1800 feet above sea level, about ten miles Northwest of Homer, New York. . . .
>
> As I looked up in the sky a little to the Northwest of us about 6:30 p.m. there appeared what I thought was a very large jet trail from Northeast to Southwest. It was very white and wide and at the Southwest end there was a break on the trail of about 1 mile. Then a very black spiral formation of what appeared to be smoke appeared about 1 mile long. We remarked that the white trail was unusually wide for a jet trail and apparently the black portion looked dark because of the angulation [*sic*] of the glow of the setting sun behind the Western hill several miles away.

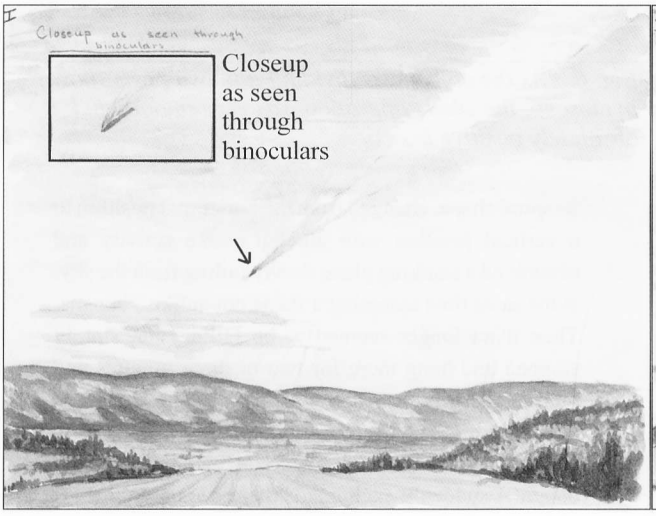


Fig. 1. "At first sighting of the dark end of the formation, it was not giving off any smoky material. This happened as it neared the cloud formation and the vapor drifted to the north, according to my daughter. However, I thought it drifted to the south as it dissipated, and we cannot agree on the north or south direction."

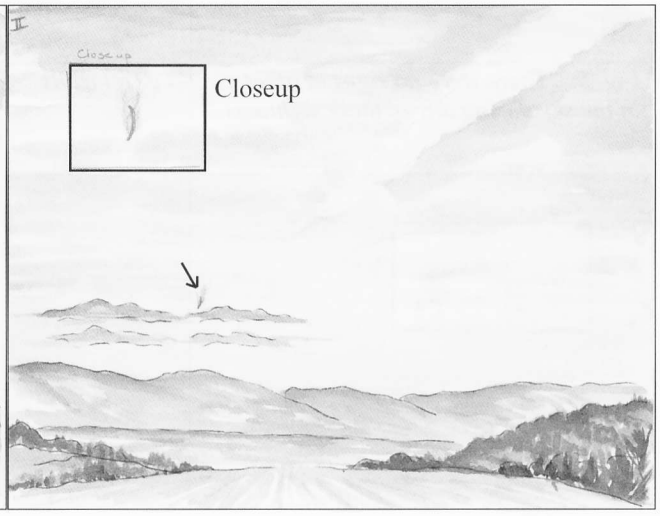


Fig. 2. "The vapor trail from the object was a great deal wider than an ordinary jet trail and after [this point it] had disappeared and should be disregarded in the subsequent [figures]."

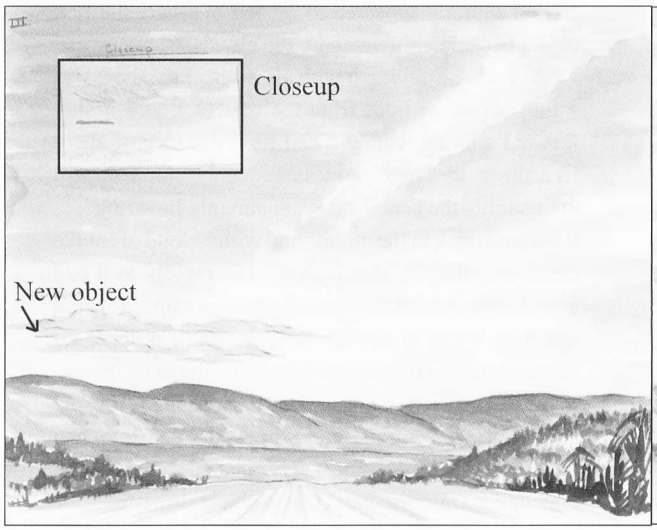


Fig. 3. "New object appears moving from left to right and at arm's length I could cover the sight of the object with my two forefingers so this must have been a very large vehicle."

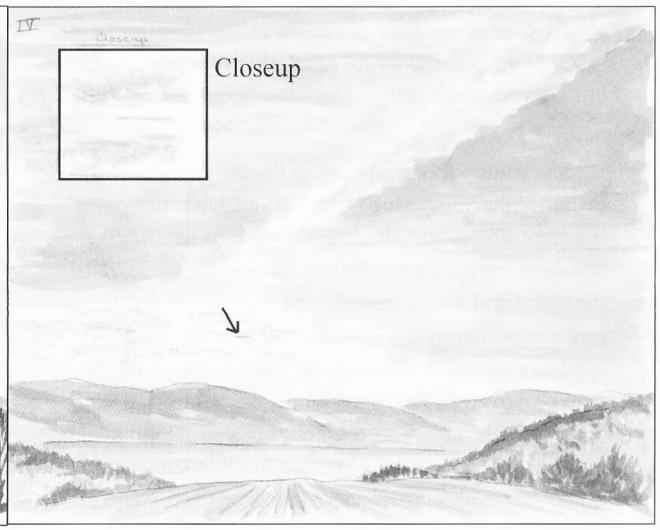


Fig. 4. "A very short time lapsed as object moved rapidly from left to right and then from right to left back again."

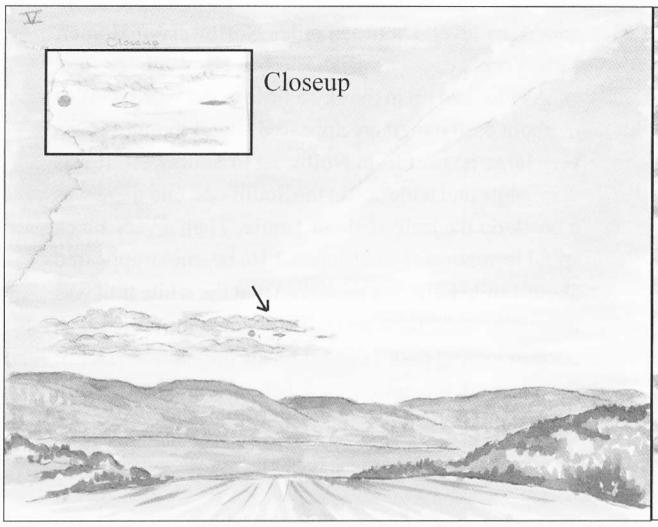


Fig. 5. "There were no signs of other planes or jet trails in the sky during any of these sightings."

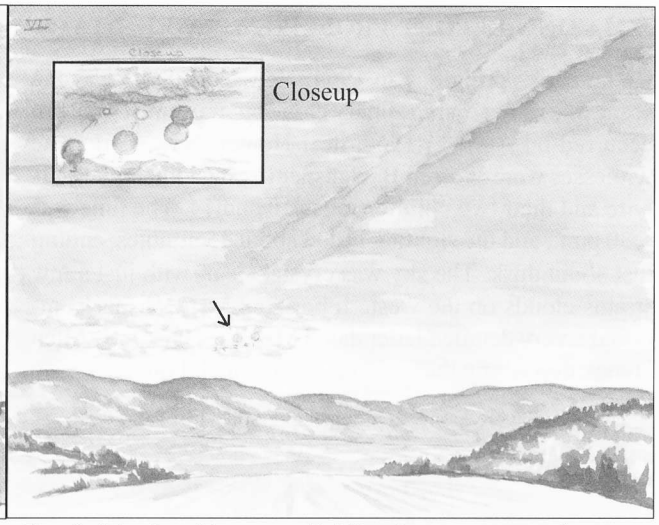


Fig. 6. "As the object was dividing into two parts shown in closeup, the whole operation was very smooth and absolutely positive in action."

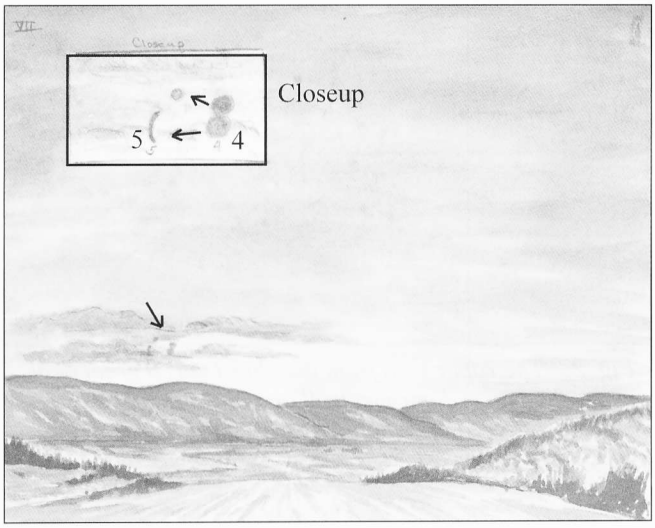


Fig. 7. The third object in Fig. 6 became the fourth object and subsequently the fifth as shown in the closeup in this view. "Object 5 should be more distinctly a pencil-shape and not curved as shown."

The white vapor trail hung in the sky and gradually drifted to the South, slowly dissipating. Up to this point we were observing what we believed to be a normal situation, except for the abrupt ending of the white trail, the space and the continuation of the black spiral tip.

Approximately ten minutes had now passed and it suddenly occurred to me that the black spiral cloud had slowly moved to the West while the white trail had drifted Southward. Also, the cloud became much darker and we all observed this. At this point I took my 6 x 25 binoculars to observe it and was shocked to see wisps of smoke actually streaming out of the black cloud . . . almost boiling out. It was now slowly approaching the distant stratus cloud formation silhouetted against the Western hill. Suddenly the black cloud, still retaining its spiral shape, changed from the horizontal position to a vertical position with greater smoke activity and resembled a smoking plane slowly falling from the sky, at the same time assuming a shape not unlike a banana. Then it no longer seemed to be falling, but simply stopped and hung there for two or three minutes and then very slowly seemed to sink into the clouds and was obliterated. . . .

After about three minutes had elapsed . . . my daughter suddenly exclaimed "there's another one". It appeared as a horizontal pencil shaped object. It was impossible at that distance to determine the length, but it could have been as large as a submarine. It moved from the left on the horizon to the right. We could not agree as to whether this was the original object or another rendezvousing with the first object, as this second sighting appeared to the left of where the first object became obliterated by the clouds.

As I was observing it with my binoculars, there was a flash of white light from the rear of it and it shot forward with incredible speed for a distance of about five times its length and as suddenly stopped, still maintaining the pencil shape, apparently hovering. . . . It became thick in the middle and with a cloud of smoke emanating from it, shot backward as rapidly as it had gone forward about the same distance. Again it hovered and then began to shorten in length until it appeared saucer shaped, fat in the middle. Then the most incredible part occurred . . . from the saucer shape it became almost perfectly round and slowly divided into two parts, one above the other, very much as a single cell does under a microscope. The top object slowly became smaller as it appeared to fade off in the distance, while the second object headed downward at a 45° angle toward the spot where we had seen the banana shaped object disappear. At this point it divided in two again

but the bottom object now assumed a vertical pencil shape while the top oval object slowly faded away. We realize the pencil shape could well be a disc observed from the side. Then the pencil shaped object also faded from sight.

This whole episode took place in about forty-five minutes and ended just about dusk.

Ochsner's wife created detailed drawings of the sequence of events, which are included with this article. This case is listed in Blue Book files as unidentified.

Source: CUFOS files.

Strange Sight in New England

In the pre-dawn hours of a late summer day in 1966, a rather interesting satellite-object observation occurred in New England. The account presented here is taken from the case file provided me by UFO researcher Raymond E. Fowler. It was based largely on the findings of investigator H. W. Eismann, who conducted a two-hour interview with the two witnesses, a married couple. Fowler also provided a most helpful evaluation of the report, which was included in the case file.

The event occurred on September 17,1966, at Ipswich, Massachusetts. It is best described by citing major excerpts of Eismann's report:

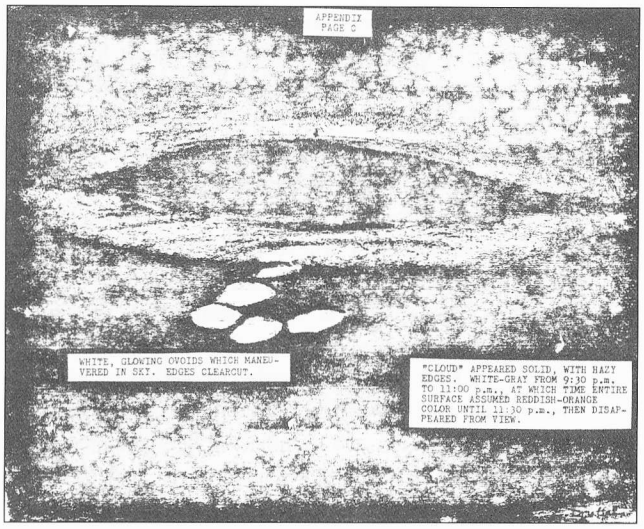
> The following narrative is as I piece together the story and it fills in the information not recorded on the report forms. Also attached is a sketch of the object, drawn by myself.
>
> On September 17, Saturday morning at approximately 4:45 a.m., Mrs. M. [the witness requested confidentiality] awakened with a coughing spell. She got up to get a drink and noticed a light in the Crane's Beach area, which is opposite their home about one-half mile distant . . . and in a southeasterly direction. She called her husband who joined her and they then spent one and one-half hours observing the activity, both from inside the house as well as through open windows on their porch.
>
> The object first sighted was an elongated, cigar shape object standing on end on the beach near the water's edge. It glowed with a golden, white light, sometimes dim and then bright enough to see the sand around the base. It appeared to tilt to about a 60-degree angle from the vertical at times but they never did observe it leaving the area. It just appeared to disappear as it became light outside. One feature of this object was what appeared to be a dotted line effect extending from the middle to the ground at about a 45-degree angle. The description indicated what might be considered a ladder leaning against the object. The height of the object from the house appeared to be about 6 inches which would relate to something ±500 feet tall at that distance [Fowler later estimated a minimum height of 300 feet]. This object was observed for over one hour.
>
> During the observation period, two bright lights were observed above the beach moving toward the vertical light. These spots were about the size of peas and moved with a slapping motion, sometimes fast, sometimes slowly. They came together at the top of the vertical object, but as they joined, there appeared to be three lights instead of the original two. These lights then left the large object from time to time, ranging low over the water, disappearing at times behind the hills at Crane's Beach. One object, elliptical in shape, dark except for a faint glow that revealed its outline, moved low over the water toward the house. It moved to within one-quarter mile . . . and disappeared behind a small island in front of the house. Mr. and Mrs. M. never did see the object leave, but they didn't go out to the island the next day to investigate nor did they go to Crane's Beach to look for tracks.

Peculiar sight over Catalina

On an early summer night in 1968, various witnesses in Southern California observed a rather peculiar sight in the sky. Fortuitously, the Los Angeles NICAP Subcommittee had established SKYNET, a tracking and filter center designed to collect and investigate UFO reports. On the night of July 9, a series of phone calls from Long Beach and surrounding communities concerning a large, glowing mass, positioned high over the Catalina Channel, came into the project coordinator's home in Pasadena.

The first call came from a group of teenagers aged 13 to 18 gathered at the home of Kenneth Allgreen, three miles north of the shoreline. At 9:35 p.m. they noticed a gray-white diamond-shaped haze under the full moon in the south-southeast. At 10:05 it began moving 55 degrees of arc in a horizontal line toward the west. By 10:15 it had returned to its original position near the moon. Maneuvering near the large mass were five smaller cloud-like objects, oval shaped with clear-cut edges. Two were grayish and three were "kind of white." Viewed through binoculars they looked solid. They kept their shape and precise edges through subsequent maneuvers. Although the edges of the larger object were "fuzzy," it did not seem to be a normal cloud because it moved too fast during its brief journey westward and back again—55 degrees in three minutes. It was many times the size of the smaller balls, an estimated 5–6 times the diameter of the full moon. The end facing west was long and narrow and the part facing east was shaped "like a diamond." The boys were convinced that they were viewing something highly unusual. They estimated that the main mass was about 10 miles high. About 11:00 p.m. the large mass turned reddish-orange in color and began traveling upward at an approximate angle of 30 degrees. By 11:30 p.m., it "just faded away," taking five minutes to dissipate.

The next call to SKYNET came from the family of I. Castano of Compton. From their home 7 miles north of the


APPENDIX
PAGE C
WHITE, GLOWING OVOIDS WHICH MANEU-
VERED IN SKY. EDGES CLEARCUT.
"CLOUD" APPEARED SOLID, WITH HAZY
EDGES. WHITE-GRAY FROM 9:30 p.m.
TO 11:00 p.m., AT WHICH TIME ENTIRE
SURFACE ASSUMED REDDISH-ORANGE
COLOR UNTIL 11:30 p.m., THEN DISAP-
PEARED FROM VIEW.

Santa Catalina cloud cigar, 1968.

Long Beach witnesses, his family had viewed a group of four oval, cloud-like objects about one-eighth the size of the full moon. The objects were observed from 9:30 to 10:00 p.m. and were glowing white with precise edges. They were gathered around the moon when first seen and then started leaving "right and left." They seemed to be far out in space. Stated Castano, "the objects spread out and then dashed toward one another. It looked like some kind of war." The Castanos apparently did not see the large cloud, but it should be noted that they were further north than the Long Beach witnesses.

Another report comes from the files of Paul Wilson of Hawthorne, a local UFO investigator. His neighbors, Michael and Leslie G., told him that for 20 minutes they had viewed a glowing oval object, slightly smaller than the full moon. It was shiny and white with clear-cut edges and seemed to be several miles away. Soundless, it seemed to maneuver in the general area of the moon.

While this activity was going on, SKYNET contacted Jim Griebel, the only SKYNET member residing near the coast. His home was three miles north of the Long Beach witnesses. Through binoculars he could see a cloudlike mass low on the southerly horizon. Whether composed of one or two masses he was not sure, but the cloud(s) seemed diamond-shaped on one end and round on the other. While the bright light from the moon interfered with Griebel's view, there would seem to be little doubt that he was seeing the large, cloud-like mass which was being viewed from Long Beach.

Source: Ann Druffel, "Santa Catalina Island Recurring 'Cloud-Cigars'," *Proceedings of the 1976 CUFOS Conference.*

Some others duly noted

The reports below indicate the range of satellite-object and cloud cigar observations. Some are fairly recent, indicating that this type of report is persistent.

October 17, 1952, Oloron Sainte-Marie (Pyrénées-Atlantiques Department), France. At about 12:30 p.m., numerous witnesses (possibly in the low hundreds) in Oloron and surrounding areas saw a long, narrow cylinder inclined at a 45-degree angle slowly moving toward the southwest. It was whitish, nonluminous, and very well defined. A sort of plume of white smoke was emanating from its upper end. At some distance in front of the cylinder, a large number (perhaps as many as 30) of reddish spherical objects, surrounded by a yellowish ring inclined at an angle, were also seen. They moved in pairs, in a rather erratic fashion. By the time the objects had disappeared from sight, masses of white threads fell slowly to the ground and then evaporated.

October 27, 1952, Gaillac (Tarn Department), France. Ten days later virtually the same spectacle occurred again. Here the number of known witnesses was about 100. The similarities between both cases in the southwest of France are striking in almost all respects. Both are rightfully regarded as important events. However, note should be made of the fact that of the several hundred satellite object reports that were considered for my study, only Oloron and Gaillac involved the fall of the unusual substance known as angel hair.

May 1953, Labrador. The two pilots and 21 passengers of an aircraft flying over the snowy wastes of Labrador saw six strange objects appear off their plane's right wing, flying in formation. One of the passengers, Raymond Pustelnik, came forward with the report.

Stated Pustelnik, "The sky was clear and visibility good when they appeared suddenly. They looked like saucers placed upside down, were shiny like silver and were flying some 4 miles from us. We'd been watching for 35 seconds before a large, barrel-shaped object appeared out of nowhere. Hanging beneath it, we could see what looked like shifting clouds of colored gas. As soon as it appeared, the saucer-like objects broke formation and one by one glided into the barrel-shaped object from underneath. Then the mother ship suddenly went straight up and disappeared in 4 seconds."

February 23, 1963, Highcliffe, England. At 9:45 p.m., an oval object was seen in the sky that was emerald-green in color and surrounded by a sort of glow. After hanging in the sky for 10 minutes the witness saw several (apparently two) smaller objects emerge from the larger one, which had now assumed a vertical position. These smaller objects flew away and disappeared over the Channel.

December 1974, near Higher Chisworth, Glossop, England. At 7:30 a.m. a vertical object floated above Wemeth Low, a prominent hill. It had a flattened upper end and a tapering base. The object changed shape (from round to oval to cigar and back to oval again) before disappearing, and discharged several small spheres from the blunt end—like "soap bubbles being blown." The witness elaborated on this description, saying that they seemed to cling briefly to the end, then sped away southwards.

(continued on page 26)

Mysterious island: The UFO legacy of the Isle of Man

BY JENNY RANDLES

It is likely that you have never been to the Isle of Man. Perhaps you've never heard of it. This would possibly still be true even if you hail from Great Britain, of which Man is a crown dependency. More than half of the British population, polls suggest, could not locate it on a map; only motorcycle enthusiasts seem familiar with this island because it is the home to the famous annual Tourist Trophy (T.T.) race around the dangerous mountain passes.

Yet paradoxically, many who are ignorant of its geographical location have seen it in *Waking Ned Devine* (1999) or other films. Its scenic beauty and Old World charm ensure that it is widely used by location scouts seeking a setting with something special to offer. It rarely plays itself in these epics but substitutes for many parts of the world, often for times past.

In the real world, the Isle of Man, some 31 miles by 11 miles, is located in the Irish Sea almost equidistant from the shores of Ireland, Scotland, and England. Thanks to its friendly tax laws, it attracts wealthy residents but has some famous natives in a population of just 73,000 people including the Gibb Brothers (of Bee Gees fame) who have recorded a version of the Manx national anthem, "Ellan Vannin," in celebration.

Despite being effectively part of Britain via common currency, laws, and government, the Isle of Man possesses significant autonomy (being officially neither part of the United Kingdom nor of the European Economic Community). Its status is best described as a region with the flavor of another country. That greatly enhances its attraction to visitors.

Sunset isle

I have visited the Isle of Man often since early childhood. This is partly thanks to its remarkable mix of cultures—from Celtic origins, via its long but amicable Viking occupation, and then the 800 years of British rule that fostered its existing democratic independence.

However, the island has many other attractions. The Tynwald parliament was created by the Vikings over 1,000 years ago and is the oldest continuously functioning democracy in the world (the first country to grant women the right to vote in national elections, in 1881). Its transport system is amazing—with horse trams, electric streetcars, and steam trains operating the regular day-to-day services. And amidst the spectacular mountain scenery are treats such as the oldest working waterwheel in the world in the haunted glen at Laxey.

Man has special appeal to me because it is the spookiest island that I have ever visited. The legacy of strange phenomena dates back to before it was settled by the Celts in about 800 B.C. (there are stone circle sites here some 4,000 years old). And unlike most places where traditions live only as dim ancestral memory, the folklore of Man is part of its living culture and never far from ordinary lives.

Inhabitants still leave notes to the fairy folk (referred to cautiously as "Themselves") if they seek the return of missing pets, for example. A local council sponsored a hunt for the coastal mermaid (the ben-varrey) and encouraged bounty hunters to apply. The island is home to what has to be the weirdest poltergeist case of the 20th century (a possessed mongoose!).

All of this culminated in special arrangements that had to be made for a state visit by Queen Elizabeth II. To ensure that she paid due homage to the island's supernatural beings at their most ceremonial bridge, model fairies were made to pop up from its parapets to warn the cavalcade that the queen must bid these elemental beings good day when entering their domain. Royal protocol was superseded by the age-old beliefs that still permeate this landscape.

Given that the island is also within a UFO hot spot, its cases often have a folkloric flavor. For the outsider, it's ufological activity with a difference.

Jenny Randles, an IUR *contributing editor, is a well-known British ufologist and the author of many books on UFOs and anomalies.*

UFO HERITAGE

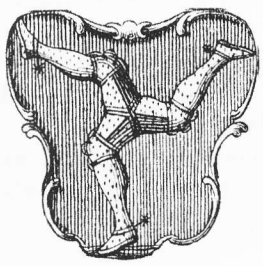
Even the foundation legends about the Isle of Man have a sort of UFO feel. The land is said to derive from the activities of a Celtic giant who tossed a clod of earth through the air to ward off an invading Scottish rival. The clod landed in the Irish Sea, producing the Isle of Man.

Man was protected from the eyes of passing fishermen by a supernatural mist still known locally as Manannán's mantle.This Manannán came from a supernatural race that supposedly settled the island when driven out of its original home by the growing presence in Europe of *Homo sapiens.* Tales of these beings, passed down by generations of farmers on the island, describe beings, known as glashtin, possessing supernatural powers. They are said to be tall, fair-skinned, and blond-haired, with elfin features such as horselike ears. They dress like the local fisher farmers.

The glashtin have many attributes of the so-called Nordics—by far the most common type of alien entity seen in British close-encounter cases up to the 1990s (when the all-pervading grays started to make their mark even here). I have interviewed several witnesses who reportedly saw these tall, blond humanoids acting like wise magicians and who claimed to have no idea that they were describing a race that supposedly came to dwell on the Isle of Man several thousand years ago.

Legends abound about the island in the period of Celtic protection. In the legends, time flows differently behind the permanent barrier of Manannán's mantle—most likely the sea mist that clings to the island's rocky shoreline. It is said that you can live for years within this magic terrain but only moments may pass in the outside world. It was in order to retain this uniqueness that the protective cloak had been put in place. There are even some scholars who connect the Celtic "Atlantis"—a blessed land with time-bending powers known in mythology as Tir na nÓg or the Land of Youth —with the Isle of Man. Of course, tricks like this with time are commonplace in modern UFO encounters. The Isle of Man has always been producing its own Oz Factor.

Even the point of release from this magical time into the mortal existence that Man knows today has a UFO theme. The story goes that 2,000 years ago a group of fisherman caught in a storm off the coast accidentally ran aground through Manannán's mantle onto the cliff-ringed shores. Once shipwrecked, they sought refuge by lighting a fire, but a terrible noise emerged from inside a dark cloud on top of a rocky slope. From out of this emerged a strange object described as a wheel of fire. It rotated and had spokes inside that resembled three legs from the knee joint downward. This entire mass tumbled through the air just above the beach with the mist seeming to swirl around with it.



The fishermen regarded it as a symbol of both their rescue and the supernatural spirit of the island that they discovered. From this sighting came what are now known today as the "three legs of Man." This motif remains the virtual emblem of the island and is ubiquitous in its cultural representation. It is featured on its postage stamps and national flag, for example. The Isle of Man may be the only country on earth whose foundation and national symbol is based upon what is at least arguably a UFO sighting.

TALES OF THEMSELVES

During the period of Celtic settlement of the island and even under Viking rule, these magical origins were always prominent in local consciousness. Indeed, they remain to some extent today; quite a few local inhabitants apply fortuitous serial numbers to their car license plates to express respect to Themselves as opposed to the personalized plates you might find in the United States or mainland Britain. The Vikings integrated rather than conquered and you can see many illustrations of this osmosis—such as Celtic crosses— that carry Viking imagery on them. Indeed, much Celtic language and belief remains intact today, as the odd place names make clear. As such the strange beings who had singled out this island as a refuge remained in the thoughts of the inhabitants. Tales of sightings and interactions persisted far longer than in most other parts of Europe. Indeed, stories still occasionally recount what sound like fusions of UFO close encounters and fairy lore.

I have found cases that run the gamut from obviously modern UFO encounters to what may well be the first known crop circles in the British Isles. One can interpret them however one wishes: UFOs, traditional supernatural belief, or (as I suspect) natural forces with a wonderfully magical gloss put over them by centuries of fantastic and romantic lore.

COWNAPPERS

One of many tales in which Themselves interacted with locals dates from around 1800 near Glen Rushen, said to be the place where the glashtin settled in an invisible city. A farmer was puzzled when his cows became poor milkers and always seemed tired at dawn when he attempted to attend to them. Believing that some ne'er-do-well was harassing his herd, he staked out his barn, only to be awakened when two of his cows began mooing in agitation. To the amazement of the witness, they were being driven across his land into open countryside by a group of men the size of six-year-old children. Following discreetly, he gaped in astonishment as a domelike mound appeared on the ground ahead and the "children" drove his cows through a hole that opened up in the side. It was pouring light from within, and he could see what appeared to be a human in there, too, seemingly in a trance.

This is by no means the only such tale, and either these child-sized beings or the classic Nordics were the perpetra-

tors in virtually all of them. Interestingly, this is the same mix that fills almost every mainland British close encounter of the third or fourth kind prior to the arrival of the Americanized versions in the late 1980s and early 1990s. It is hard to think of this mere coincidence.

An example was related in 1860 from a farm near Cregneash on the southern tip of the island. A young woman encountered one of the glashtin as she walked home at night through fields. Described as a tall, handsome human with blond hair and blue eyes, he sought to take her away with him. Though powerless to resist, she experienced respite when dawn arrived. When it did, the being seemed suddenly drained of energy. It lay on the ground but still managed to hold the farmer's daughter in his grip. She escaped when she cut herself free, leaving the entity clinging onto a small scrap of her dress.

Most encounters were less aggressive. Many centered on the Laxey area and include some fascinating features that pop up in modern UFO sightings. For instance, strange glowing lights seen in the dead of night emitted buzzing or humming noises. According to an interesting local tradition, the entities often borrowed spinning wheels at night and thereby left their gossamer webs of super finery dangled over the hedgerows—a phenomenon reminiscent of the controversial angel hair of later UFO lore.

Abducted

A classic Manx abduction made newspaper headlines when it was first reported. One can only imagine what such an account would have been had this event been reported a century later. This one took place near Laxey in November 1898.

As the witness describes the events, it was "early winter and middlin dark." He was taking a long walk across Glen Drink, as was common in the days when there were no cars or public transport, and the weather turned foul. To escape the rain, he stood under a hedge. But then something weird happened. A strange whirling noise sounded overhead. Then, he said, "my legs and knees went all queer like and the singing was all knocked out of me." Gradually a "terrible tiredness" overcame him,and he lost consciousness as he felt a force tugging him upwards toward the great sound. The next thing he knew, consciousness was returning. He felt disoriented and weak, to the point that at first he was forced to crawl. Eventually, he regained control of his muscles. It was now daylight, and several hours of which he had no recall had passed. Only after wandering for some minutes did he realize that he was now on Glen Mooar, some miles from the point of his kidnap.

This story is a classic modern UFO abduction. Indeed several very like it have been reported from the U.K. mainland in recent years. It has many similarities with the episode at Livingston, Scotland, that took place in November 1979 and about which a commemorative plaque was placed on the site by the local council. But that happened almost a century later than the events on Glen Drink. The comparisons between these two cases (and others from modern times) are so marked that there is little doubt that the same phenomenon is being described. Of course, in 1898 there were no such things as UFOs, and so Themselves got the blame for the apparent abduction on this wintry night.

Three years later, in 1901, a tragedy befell a farming family at Andreas in the north of the island. A young, preteenage son named John disappeared one day while out in the fields. Villagers searched but found no trace of him, and the family suffered accordingly. Then, out of the blue, four years after his disappearance, John wandered into the farmhouse, looking barely a day older, utterly disbelieving of the amount of time that his parents insisted had passed.

According to John's story, strange little men (assumed to be Themselves, of course, and the size of children) had rendered him senseless in the field. He next found himself in their "land." He could not explain where he now was except that the little men could show him the lives of his family. He was able to describe to family members some of the things they had been up to (including a trip to Ramsey corn market); but while he was in captivity, all his attempts to communicate with them failed. He could observe but not directly interact, despite various almost ghostlike attempts to alert his family. John said he lost all sense of time during this sojourn.

Then he found himself awakening in a strange spot. Finding that the small men were nowhere in sight, he made his way home, gradually regaining his senses, but still groggy when he found the farmhouse. He could never explain what had happened to him.

Modern sightings

As we move deeper into the 20th century, encounters continued to be reported from all over the island. These gradually adopted the terminology of UFO lore. Humming noises emerging from a moundlike object on the ground near Bradda Head had in the past been assumed to be the sounds of the unseen fairy city. Now eyes looked skyward seeking out the flying craft thought to be behind it—though in this case from 1966 nothing was seen. Remarkably, on Meayll Hill near here today a real "UFO" stands guard. It is quite the most convincing illusion of an alien landing I have personally witnessed. It catches many tourists unawares when spotted from the road to Cregneash. It is hard not to imagine Themselves having a hand in the plans that created this maritime communications center.

Just a mile from where this sits, a figure appeared on a Perwick Bay beach in a one-piece "diving suit." The four-foot-tall entity offered a rock to a local crofter. It then pressed a button on a belt around its midriff and vanished.

On November 29, 1957, a UFO encounter occurred. It sounds familiar in some ways, but it also has a magical twist. Around 2:30 a.m., several persons saw an orange ball of fire as it crossed the sky and silently exploded in a shower of

sparks. There were reports on the mainland as well, and to those who investigated in isolation the explanation was obvious: a bright meteor disintegrating in the atmosphere. So far, so simple—except that this was the Isle of Man where nothing is ever what it seems.

Four miles off Port Jack, the fishing trawler *Ella Hewett* had a spectacular view of this episode. Capt. Fred Sutton related that the thing resembled a carrot. As it came at them from the western sky, crew members could observe that it was "glowing hot" like embers of a fire. But when it passed directly over the hull of the small boat, things took a decidedly strange turn. The ship grew luminous as if a million fireflies were surrounding it. There were sparks of luminescence everywhere. Back up in the sky, the orange carrot burst like a firework into a thousand pieces, which then tumbled into the ocean and disappeared.

But the crew now noticed that something peculiar had happened to the white paint on the metal railings on the edge of the ship. It had vanished. All that seemed to be visible was the red undercoating. On their way back to harbor, they discussed the puzzling effect but could think of no explanation for it. At daybreak, however, the paintwork was seen to be perfectly normal again.

So what happened? Was this just an optical illusion of the firefly glow of the UFO? The witnesses thought not. Could some magnetic effect be able to temporarily separate the particles of the lead-based paint, which might cause the color to dilute until the effect wore off and the paint flowed back together? I have no idea, frankly.

On May 29, 1984, a huge disk with a flat base and two vast searchlights passed silently over the aptly named Fairy Cottage near Laxey. The name, of course, harks back to centuries-old reports of odd events.

In the 21st century the phenomenon has culminated in—what else?—a UFO crash. This incident took place on the late afternoon of January 14, 2001, on the slopes of Snaefell (taken from the Viking for "snow mountain"—and the island's highest peak). Several witnesses at various locations around the sides observed an object (like a small aircraft) appear to strike the telecommunications mast atop the hill. Two women on horseback sighted a shower of sparks and smoke. As with all witnesses, however, they were positioned miles from the site; Snaefell is largely inaccessible in winter.

The emergency services were ready to believe that a light aircraft may have crashed, because at the moment of the incident they had lost the power from the mast and had to use backup sources to coordinate the search and rescue. As light faded, helicopter flyovers revealed damage to the mast but no sign of wreckage on the mountaintop. The RAF sent a team from North Wales, and all next morning the slopes were scoured. By now, power was back, and it was clear that the impact damage was slight. Anything that had struck the tower might well have flown on and left the island, since the ocean was only a couple of miles away. By the time the search was called off 20 hours after the incident, it had been determined that no aircraft were missing.

A few days later, the British government urged their Manx colleagues not to bother with further inquiries, since the source was most likely a "model aircraft." The police, however, went to the trouble of taking the two horseback riders through a reconstruction. The proposed explanation seemed difficult to sustain; at the distances the women observed the mast, even a large model aircraft would be too small to be visible. The object the women saw had to be perhaps 20 feet wide.

Officially this case was never solved, though reporters who spent time digging into it told me that they had heard persistent rumors that it might have involved secret unmanned Ministry of Defence aerial-surveillance technology that "got lost" on its way to a base in Scotland.

Round in circles

The Isle of Man played a role in the birth of the crop circle mystery. In fact, the phenomenon may have first been reported here. Needless to say, the Manx folk have a unique answer to what is behind it all, and it isn't UFOs or hoaxers.

There have been relatively few modern circles on the island—just the odd simple swirled pattern in and around Jurby and Sulby in the north. This may be partly because the island is so hilly and the only real flat land is found in a few square miles of rich soil known as the Curraghs.

This location was the fabled home to a being known as the fenoderee, one of the best-known Manx fairies. He is well respected locally — probably because of the romantic story that tells of his imagined life. The entity, a member of the secret race living on the island, dared to fall in love with a Manx woman. In the fulfillment of their romance the entity missed a key festival and was thereafter banished to live in the ordinary world as an itinerant laborer. Many tales are told of his exploits during these years of exile. These range from his mundane tasks helping farmers as he wandered the land to supernatural feats of strength, such as moving giant boulders to aid crofters. But unlike most fairy stories, which are often unattributable and obviously allegoric in nature, these collectively read like the life and times of a real individual—though one of supernatural origin.

It is hard to place any timescale on these events. They were mostly handed down by oral tradition before being collected in print during the 18th century, but they certainly refer to a period at least 100 years before then, probably the 16th century or earlier. It is through these stories that the fenoderee is connected with the crop-circle mystery. These records reveal that circles formed on the farmland of the Curraghs in and around the same places where modern circles have appeared.

The circles appear to have been quite an item of discussion among the locals. Therefore, it is no surprise that they became ascribed to the activities of the fenoderee. It is

(continued on page 26)

BALLOONS, MISSILES, AND UFOS

BY MICHAEL D. SWORDS

In 1946, Scandinavians witnessed a flurry of unidentified missile-like objects. In the midst of that wave, Secretary of the Navy James Forrestal visited Sweden. Everyone said his trip was a coincidence, but Forrestal learned of the famous "ghost rockets." Late in 1948, the Pentagon received a top-secret memo which stated that some people in Sweden were considering the idea that the ghost rockets were the product of a technology beyond "any presently known culture on earth." At the same time, someone in the Pentagon was encouraging *Saturday Evening Post* writer Sidney Shalett to do an article on UFOs. The source of the encouragement? None other than James Forrestal.

We don't usually think of the U.S. Navy when we think of things flying about in the air, but in many ways that service was as active in aerial technology as either the Air Force or the Army. The center of the Navy's effort in those days was the Office of Naval Research (ONR). Cmdr. George W. Hoover, one of the Navy's most elite research engineers, stated, "Since it was established in 1946, the Office of Naval Research has been engaged in supporting the very basic research that unearths new knowledge."

What sort of research?

> The Office of Naval Research in line with its responsibility of looking 10 to 15 years in the future, conducted studies to determine the problems related to flight beyond the atmosphere and to determine the state of knowledge in areas required for such flight.
>
> In the pursuance of certain Naval Research projects to determine how pilots of very high speed high altitude aircraft would be affected, it was learned that we knew very little about how a man would react to being weightless; how he would be affected by bombardment of cosmic rays; how he would have to shield himself against unfiltered solar radiation; what measures would have to be taken to protect him against the extreme temperature changes to which he would be subjected; and other conditions foreign to man's normal way of life here on the earth's surface. Every means of probing the upper air and of simulating comparable conditions have been utilized, including high altitude balloons and instrumented rockets.

The Navy, therefore, had extremely sophisticated rocket and balloon programs (such as Helios, Skyhook, and Man-High, among others), and was concurrently interested in the state of knowledge that anyone *else* had in these areas of interest. Ghost rockets over Sweden could indicate someone else had this type of knowledge. So could flying disks operating at supersonic speeds.

THE NAVY AND UFOS

When the flying-disk wave broke out over the United States in 1947, it seemed to be proper Air Force business, and the Air Force Intelligence Directorate began collecting information about cases under the eye of Lt. Col. George Garrett. How soon the Navy became interested and involved has not yet been discovered, but I suggest it was immediately, partly because of the close cooperation between the two services. To my knowledge, no one in the UFO community has laid out an accurate and complete organizational structure and roll call of the specific personnel occupying the Air Force Intelligence Directorate during the critical 1947–1951 period. However, we do know that there were high-ranking naval officers embedded in it. When Charles Cabell was chief of intelligence, for instance, the elevated position of chief of AFOIV (Evaluations) was Capt. R. C. Brixner, USN. His replacement in this slot was naval Capt. L. L. Black. Unsurprisingly, it seems the USAF and the USN were working very closely together.

Shortly after the Air Force formally instituted Project Sign to serve as the intelligence clearinghouse for flying disk reports, the Navy requested early in 1948 to be kept apprised of all that was going on. Why? This is another question with no certain answer, but my guess is that, just as the Air Force got very interested when their own pilots began reporting disks, so too the Navy was intrigued when its own personnel had sightings. I presume the Navy never

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turned over most of these reports to the Air Force, and so we in ufology have never seen them. Also, as George Hoover stated earlier, the ONR wanted to find out everything it could about things that go high and fast in the sky. The ONR and the Office of Naval Intelligence (ONI) worked in close cooperation and their interest in the flying disks were similar.

Urner Liddel, the chief scientist in charge of the physics and nuclear research sections of ONR at the time, had been a Navy commander during World War II. The Navy either tasked him to look at UFO cases, or he volunteered. In 1966, he wrote to a good friend on the eve on that friend's taking on a certain well-known chore. The friend was University of Colorado physicist Edward U. Condon.

> Dear Ed:
>
> Your propensity for tackling difficult and contentious problems is well known. But now you have taken on a chore which exceeds any of those that I have heard about in the past—the study of flying saucers. I was intimately involved in this in the period from roughly 1948 to 1953 at which time I gave it up as a bad job. There are two classes of people—the believers and the unbelievers. The Keyhoes, the Heards, and the Edwards make a living at this sort of thing and, therefore, are very violently opposed to any attempt to explain the phenomena in a rational manner. You are well aware already, I am sure, that the impact of the observations is largely psychological and only in rare instances does one see an exhibit of unknown phenomena. I have been aware of Hynek's attitude for some 13 or 14 years and still do not understand it. He is a reasonably good astronomer but for this period of time has held on to his concept of the mysticism of the phenomenon.

Although there is much to chew on in that paragraph, we can simply take for our purposes the fact that Liddel was studying UFO reports for the Navy from 1948, and he was doubtless getting most of them indirectly from the Air Force through ONI. In early 1951, he announced to the press that he had looked into about 2,000 cases. Not coincidentally, the Air Force's Project Grudge had collected about 1,800 cases and is almost certainly his primary source for reports.

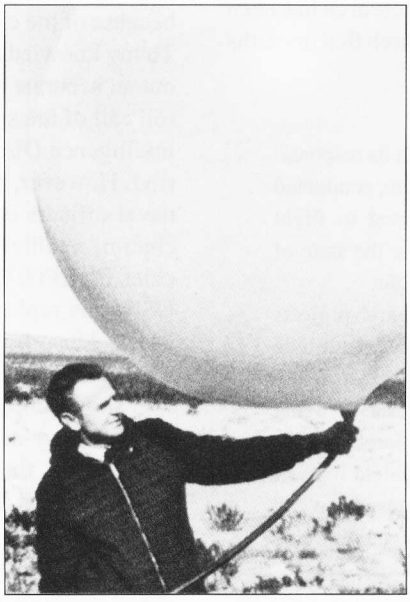
So USAF was passing flying disk reports to the Navy, and one desk where they were landing was that of ONR nuclear chief Urner Liddel. This was the analogous situation to what probably happened in the Air Force, for a time, with George Valley (ca. 1949) and Joseph Kaplan (ca. 1949–1950): Some member of the Air Force Scientific Advisory Board was keeping tabs on UFOs over the shoulder of Projects Sign and Grudge.

When in mid-1948 it became apparent that Project Sign was heading towards an evaluation of the flying disks as extraterrestrial spacecraft, many staffers went on red alert—not only such UFO debunkers in the Air Force Intelligence Directorate as Col. E. H. Porter and Maj. Jerry Boggs, but also Air Force personnel concerned with psychological warfare. One early document indicates concerns about psychological warfare and specifically mentions the USN/ONR's secret balloon projects conducted by the General Mills Corporation. ONI seems to have been just as alarmed by Project Sign's impending extraterrestrial estimate as Porter and Boggs, and it agreed to help the anti-ET forces at the Air Force Intelligence Directorate prepare an opposing estimate. This document (AIR 100-203-79), coauthored by both Air Force and Naval intelligence, was officially published in December 1948 but was in development months earlier, and certainly helped in defeating Project Sign's extraterrestrial hypothesis for the flying disk reports.

ONI held that it was undesirable to treat the flying disks as extraterrestrial. Considering them to be foreign technology was minimally tolerable, but it was much better to label them as misidentifications and general nonsense. Liddel was aware of this attitude and it apparently matched his own position perfectly.

Scientists see UFOs

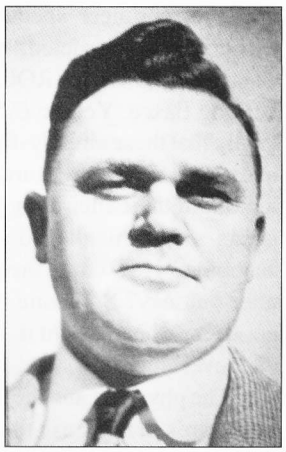
All of the Navy was not, however, on the same page as ONR. This was because ONR was testing a lot of Skyhook balloons and, for some unknown reason, the UFOs took an interest in them. While the Air Force issued an ongoing series of negative statements about the disks (with ONI supposedly agreeing), the Navy began to receive a small but high-quality stream of UFO reports from their balloon and missile corps.



Charles B. Moore

On April 24, 1949, General Mills atmospheric physicist Charles B. Moore and four Navy enlisted men from White Sands were treated to perhaps one of the most important UFO cases of all time during a balloon launch three miles north of Arrey, New Mexico. This incident was well documented by one of the scientific heads of the ONR's operations in New Mexico, Cmdr. Robert McLaughlin, as well as Dr. James McDonald and, more recently, Dr. Bruce Maccabee. This case was special because it offered some scientific details, and Moore was an expert in knowing what was in the sky (planes, missiles, balloons, and birds) and thus could tell what the UFO was *not*. Since Moore was tracking the object through a theodolite, he felt he could make at least a roughly accurate estimate of its size,

altitude, and speed. The UFO was somewhere between 40 and 100 feet in diameter and it climbed steeply at about five miles per second, or 18,000 mph, before it faded out about 60 miles up. To Moore it seemed to be some sort of missile moving at near escape velocity.



Robert McLaughlin

McLaughlin had his own sighting about a month later at White Sands while he was watching a missile launch. This led him to collect a few other UFO reports, including those by famous astronomer Clyde Tombaugh. He wrote in a letter to his friend, Dr. James Van Allen, that these incidents had convinced him that we were dealing with an extraterrestrial phenomenon.

But the Air Force kept up its debunking, feeding writer Sidney Shalett information that the disks were bunk, and putting out an admission that MIT balloons caused an East Coast UFO flap in late May or early June. They probably also passed Shalett the word that a scientist at ONR would be happy to talk to him on the topic. We don't know if the unnamed scientist was Liddel, but what Shalett got could easily have come from him: UFOs were caused largely by Navy projects like the Skyhook balloons. In fact, a Skyhook was identified as the explanation for the most sensational case of all time, the Mantell crash of January 7, 1948. One would assume that ONI and Air Force intelligence knew of the reports by Moore and McLaughlin, who claimed to have sent them the information he gathered, and that they were forwarded to ONR and Liddel, yet Shalett gets "Skyhook, et al." as the explanation for the sightings. Hmm.

On July 3, 1949, one of the main experts working under the chief of the Navy's guided missile program, Cmdr. M. B. Taylor, saw a disk in the company of a multitude of others, near Longview, Washington. His chief, Rear Adm. Delmer Fahrney, knew about this case (and doubtless others) and was a UFO enthusiast for years afterwards. He became titular head of Donald Keyhoe's NICAP advisory board after he retired.

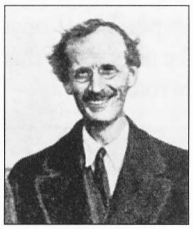
In August, the Navy logged another UFO observation by technically qualified personnel at a Mogul balloon watch. The guys sitting behind desks at Air Force intelligence, ONI, and ONR wanted the disks to be nonsense. The Navy and balloon scientists like McLaughlin in the field knew otherwise. After waiting in vain for a satisfactory response to the reports he had sent to the Pentagon, in August he told the press about Moore's sighting.

The Air Force didn't appreciate that, but McLaughlin was not only intelligent and tough but somehow flameproof. He began to think of other audiences for the information he had gathered (probably encouraged by Keyhoe's January 1950 UFO article in *True*), and prepared an article for the newspaper supplement *This Week*. For some reason (Pentagon pressure?), the publication backed out, but *True* stepped in and published its second blockbuster pro-UFO article, "How Scientists Tracked a Flying Saucer" in March 1950. In it, McLaughlin unambiguously stated his conviction that the disks were extraterrestrial.

Because he was an active Navy officer, McLaughlin's article had to be cleared by officials in the Pentagon, according to Ed Ruppelt in *The Report on Unidentified Flying Objects.* But who approved it, and why? The article and Keyhoe's first book *Flying Saucers from Outer Space* were on a simultaneous time track (Keyhoe's cover artist used McLaughlin's conception of what the disks might look like up close), and the Air Force must have hated the thought of either seeing the light of day. At the same time, Frank Scully's notorious book *Behind the Flying Saucers* was published. Moore also reported his own sighting to the press in March 1950. This was a tremendous amount of counterpressure to the Air Force's supernegativity, all coming at once. Did somebody in the Navy's higher echelon want to contribute to that? All we know is that some naval officer approved of McLaughlin's revelations and the release of his opinions about the disks.

Military and media debunking

Then the Empire struck back. At the end of March 1950, University of Minnesota professor Jean Piccard, one of the originators of the General Mills balloon program, said that he thought those UFO cases which were not the product of lack of knowledge, misidentification, or imagination were likely people seeing "his" balloons. (General Mills researchers such as J. J. Kaliszewski and Ed Yost would have ground their teeth at the phraseology, by the way. They thought Piccard was a real liability on a manned balloon flight.) Piccard's comments, though expressed earlier by *Popular Science* and Shalett, seemed to stick this time.



Jean Piccard

Maj. DeWitt Searles

While the Air Force's public relations officer, Maj. DeWitt Searles, was pictured in hands-out-gazing-to-heavens mockery of saucers and recited a standard Project Grudge debunking line (the NEA writer Douglas Larsen knew what was going on, writing, "It's Searles's corollary function to deny their existence"), and Naval Air Chief John F. Floberg chimed in ("I haven't seen any saucers, and don't expect to"), someone was pointing promi-

nent ABC radio broadcaster Henry Taylor toward a different debunking approach.

Taylor reported to the country that the UFOs are real, they are wonderful, and they are a source of comfort to all of us. That is because they are American secret projects—disk-shaped missiles that disintegrate in the air and planes that fly without conventional wings. The Navy's "flying flapjack" project was alluded to in his report.

U.S. News and World Report was already onto the same story. In its April 7, 1950, issue the magazine trumpeted that our new "jet-propelled disks can outfly other planes." How could the mystery go on for so long? They are top-secret aircraft that are not flown by the Air Force. "No official announcements are being made yet," said the article. "But about the only big secret left is who makes them. Evidence points to Navy experiments."

All of this was doubtless stunning news to Admiral Fahrney or Commander McLaughlin, who knew that it was ridiculous. At General Mills in Minneapolis, the balloon scientists who worked for the Navy were sarcastically amused. Team leader Kaliszewski said that he personally knew the test pilot who flew the "flapjack." As a UFO explanation, "it was bunk."

Who was leaking this phony stuff? The *U.S. News* article quoted "top level governmental engineers," apparently had some cooperation at least from NACA (NASA's aeronautical forerunner), and credited the original secret-experiment concept to Charles H. Zimmerman. But we can be pretty sure that it didn't come from Zimmerman. Ruppelt wrote:

Zimmerman

> Charley Zimmerman was the technical advisor to the chief at the Analysis Branch at ATIC [the Intelligence division at Wright-Patterson AFB]. I never could figure out exactly where he stood on the subject of UFOs, but I think he was a bit of a believer. Several times I'd try to put through an explanation that a UFO was a balloon or other known object, and he'd argue like mad against it. Many times he'd come running into my office with a report in his hand to show me "a new red hot report."

If not Zimmerman, then who?

The same day that Taylor spoke of secret U.S. projects in Dallas, the Navy's Chief of Ordnance, Rear Adm. A. G. Noble, was saying in the same city that "technical experts could find no proof that the strange objects reported in the skies were real in any of the evidence so far accumulated in Washington."

What about NACA? Well, NACA was too big an organization to sort out likely candidates without more specific clues, but the articles refer to a "top level Government aeronautical engineer," a "top-ranking physicist," and a "scientist for the Research and Development Board." The top-level engineer speculated about the details of how saucers are constructed. It sounds a lot like the notorious Canadian VZ-9A AVROCar design, which turned out to be a flying fiasco. Yet the *U.S. News* article waxed enthusiastically that these already-flying saucers are "exactly 105 feet in diameter," have red-orange or blue exhaust flames coming out of their encircling jet nozzles, and are built in three layers—all of this allegedly obvious from "well-documented accounts." How could the magazine and writer put out such utter baloney? Someone in authority fed them this bill of goods and they bought it, like any media outlet too close to the government.

The physicist and the R&D Board scientist were quoted afterwards in response to the revelations by *U.S. News* and Taylor. They both avoided the plane or missile explanations and instead said: UFOs? Yes. American? Yes. ET? No. The UFOs were Navy balloons. The physicist said these balloons were part of our country's psychological-warfare effort to fly over Soviet territories and drop propaganda leaflets. He likened them to the Japanese use of Fugo balloons during World War II as an offensive weapon. The other scientist was more definite. The "flying saucers" were giant plastic balloons made by General Mills in Minneapolis: "There's nothing strange or mysterious about these balloons. There have been stories and pictures about various types of balloons used for weather and upper atmospheric research. By no stretch of the imagination could they be considered flying saucers or some secret weapon."

The intent of all these remarks was to direct attention toward American planes and balloons to explain the well-meaning but mistaken reports of odd things in the sky. One wonders why these ridiculous ideas were floated and why anyone from the R&D Board would be an accomplice to the disinformation.

One organization that wondered out loud was a *U.S. News* competitor, *Time*. "Why did the *U.S. News* fall for the flying saucer story?" it asked on April 17. The editor of *U.S. News* said that the story was inspired by Cmdr. McLaughlin's sightings and stories, plus information revealed about the secret Navy flying flapjack. *Time* responded that it had reported on the flapjack in 1946. McLaughlin himself told the editors that he thought the *U.S. News* piece was full of "wild statements." *Time* went on to thoroughly debunk the saucers. *Newsweek* joined in the fun the same day by picturing singer Marguerite Piazza in a specially designed flying saucer hat.

Planes, balloons, and ludicrous nonsense—the elite military community and the national media closed ranks rapidly and effectively to ward off McLaughlin and other highly credible UFO observers. Meanwhile, others were seeing UFOs during missile launches in the southwest. At Los Alamos, there was the first in a series of incidents when laboratory personnel recorded odd readings of high radiation coincident with nearby UFO reports.

Nine months later, the press played a similar tune. This time the attack was apparently inaugurated not by "danger-

Bob Considine

Gen. Harold Watson

Lincoln LaPaz

Painting by Mrs. Lincoln LaPaz of a green fireball seen over the Sandia Mts. of New Mexico in January 1949

ously good" observations, but by a dangerous book and a man with little tolerance for UFO irritations. The book was Frank Scully's *Behind the Flying Saucers*, and the intolerant man was Gen. Harold Watson, chief of the USAF Air Materiel Command. Scully's book had been published in mid-1950, and its popularity was gaining momentum. To its force was added Keyhoe's *Flying Saucers Are Real*, which appeared later in the year. Watson was fed up with the innuendoes that AMC was hearing about flying saucers, crashed disks, and little men. He called in well-known writer Bob Considine and unloaded. Considine's January 1951 article in *Cosmopolitan*, liberally quoting Watson, was one of the most emphatically derisive statements ever made about UFOs and their observers.

Perhaps encouraged by this invective, or perhaps just coincidentally, the Navy and the R&D Board soon weighed in. Liddel had been analyzing UFO reports for three years, some of the latest being the radiation cases from Los Alamos. If he was indeed paying attention to the reports of his own balloon experts, he knew he was dealing with something unexplained. So what did he do? He told the press he had looked into 2,000 reports and almost all of them were bunk; however, the few cases that are interesting all correlate to launches and overflights of General Mills Skyhook balloons. The press leapt to approve. *Look* led the way with a major article on February 27, quoting Liddel that, "There is not a single reliable report of an observation which is not attributable to the cosmic balloons." In March, Liddel issued a formal seven-page report, "Bogies at Angels 100," out of the ONR to make this explanation official. One wonders what Moore and McLaughlin thought of this move?

We know what the General Mills balloonists, who actually launched the Skyhooks, thought of it. When asked about it many years later, project leader Kaliszewski said of the article, "I remember reading it and I just laughed."

Of course, Liddel's contention *was* preposterous. It was laughable, if laughter is the way one copes with disgust and anger. But why did he write, and then release, this report? And why did the R&D Board enthusiastically second it? Almost immediately following Liddel's public comments, the R&D Board scheduled a Pentagon briefing for the press. This time we know who was involved: the chairman, William Webster. He supported Liddel and took pains to blast the ideas that UFOs were some new weapon or that they contained men from Mars. Since one must believe that the chairman of the Board knew that Liddel's theory was bunk (the R&D Board had also been getting UFO information from Wright-Patterson since the Project Sign days), what was Webster's agenda in coming out in support so strongly? Michael Hall intuits a Board connection to crashed disk retrieval ("The Research and Development Board: Unanswered Questions," *IUR*, Summer 2001, pp. 6–11, 32).

Part of the Board's concern could have been the hysteria that might arise if people thought UFOs were enemy weapons. This was the time of Project Twinkle, the Air Force study of the green fireballs in New Mexico. Both the one-time scientific head of that project, Anthony Mirarchi, and the garrulous scientist who inspired it, Lincoln LaPaz, thought that the fireballs were a new form of miniature Soviet missile programmed to self-destruct before reaching the ground. Mirarchi hastened to speak to the press following Liddel's revelations to portray them as dangerous to the security of the country. Less emotionally and spectacularly, LaPaz issued a fireball report of his own in May. The Air Force, and probably the Navy and the R&D Board, were not happy with either man. Mirarchi's replacement, Louis Elterman, caught the drift and wrote the entirely negative *Project Twinkle Final Report* published at Wright-Patterson on November 27, 1951.

Meanwhile, UFOs continued to visit the Navy's General Mills balloons. In October 1951, Kaliszewski and his team north of Minneapolis tracked a UFO maneuvering around their balloon both visually and by theodolite. He told researcher Tom Tulien, "We were up there watching the balloon for possible malfunction, when all of sudden into our field of vision comes this object—had no business being there—so this is what we reported. It passed behind the balloon, over the balloon, it moved around. It had to have some interest in the balloon or it wouldn't have hung around."

The next day, another object appeared. Kaliszewski made a rough calculation of the UFO's relative speed ("about five degrees per second"), which at his estimate of six miles distant puts its speed in the 1,500–2,000 mph range. He continued:

Some of these balloons, they attracted these things.

I would say, starting with the 50s through the late 50s there must have been dozens of sightings but nobody bothered to report them.

I've had a number of other sightings, but I didn't log them in because nobody'd listen to you.

If you did have a sighting—if that thing began changing altitudes in 10 or 15 seconds from out-of-space where you almost couldn't see it, down to almost ground level, and then go right to left at estimated several thousand miles per hour, and all of a sudden make a 90 degree turn and go in a different direction—we've seen all those things and there's no way that the human body could handle it.

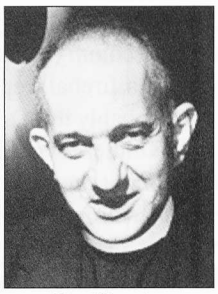
If you talked to somebody they just pooh-poohed. You couldn't talk to Wright Field or any of the design groups around the country.

Kaliszewski, Moore, McLaughlin, almost the whole General Mills and Navy balloon project field workers, knew that there were real UFOs—technological devices that showed an interest in the balloon and rocket flights. Other people, reading their reports, must have known this too. Somehow, all of this eluded Urner Liddel.

Making sense of Liddel

In 1952, when the great UFO flap was raging around the US, the Optical Society of America decided to hold a series of

Donald Menzel and Edward Condon in 1950



Fr. Hayden

talks about flying saucers. They invited Liddel, J. Allen Hynek, and Donald Menzel. Menzel presented his hypotheses on radar angels and optical distortions in his usual impressive but pseudoscientific manner. (The Air Force had several scientists look at Menzel's ideas and privately pronounced them to be full of errors and to account for very few cases. Astronomer Father Hayden of Georgetown said that Menzel's so-called "demonstrations" were high-schoolish.) Hynek presented a rather mild, moderate talk, which (in line with the upbeat view around Blue Book at the time) took the saucer mystery as a legitimate one. Liddel, surprisingly, completely abandoned his General Mills balloon-based explanation. Essentially, the whole UFO phenomenon was now "mass hysteria," "fear psychosis," and "sensation-seeking."

Phantasmagoria
or
Unusual Observations in the Atmosphere*

URNER LIDDEL
Bendix Aviation Corporation, Detroit, Michigan
(Received December 22, 1952)

For many eras in man's history, the sky has been occupied by various gods, or constellations, or birds, mythical or real. A new concept has arisen in the last few years, largely a product of aviation and balloonry, and civil air defense spotters. In general the reports have more psychological than physical significance. However, certain optical phenomena are now gaining far wider interest than among research men in optics. Some "authentic reports" by "reliable, competent observers" are recounted and considered. While complete interpretation of all "reports" is impossible, due to lack of sufficient experimental data, NO evidence exists for any phenomena not explicable by standard physical concepts.

Weirdly, the Optical Society asked him to write this up for publication in their journal, and his article appeared in April 1953 (above). Now it was Menzelian optical effects that explained all the puzzling cases, along with an occasional balloon. But the UFO craze was mainly due to mass hysteria, pseudoscience, dishonesty, greed, media hype, self-hypnosis, fantasy, perceptual errors, and paranoia. Surely, this was the man the Navy would want sitting in the Office of Naval Research, reading sighting reports from Moore, McLaughlin, and Kaliszewski, and telling you what to think about UFOs.

What explains an overeducated lunatic like Liddel? Hard to say, isn't it? I am tempted to flatly answer "stupidity," but the man was intelligent in some ways. Next one is tempted to say "cover-up," and maybe that's true, but he doesn't *really* seem to be enough of a trustworthy insider for that role. What he seems to be is one of that relatively common breed of establishment scientists who live in a small, comfortable universe ("a large intellect in a tiny mind," someone once phrased it). These sorts of folks are both superiority-flaunting egotists ("Look at all those fools out here, har, har, har") and instinctively threatened paranoiacs (somehow the "unbelievable" is coming to get them and destroy their world). They continue to have high positions and exert authority because they are clever, take the imaginative low road, pick off only low-hanging fruit, and embed themselves in the Old Boys Club. Although they'd be outraged to know it, they're also useful dupes for the people really in the know who want to manipulate things. Liddel's use of pseudoscience in his essay betrays him as one of those forerunners of CSICOP, who were galvanized by chemist Irving Langmuir's call to scientific arms against "pathological science," a term he coined during a colloquium at General Electric's Knolls Research Laboratory on December 18, 1953, in which he warned about "the science of things that aren't so." Liddel even used Langmuir's main example, N-rays.

But I surmise that there were cover-up artists at work here as well—people who feared the use of UFOs for psychological warfare, citizen hysteria, and perhaps even

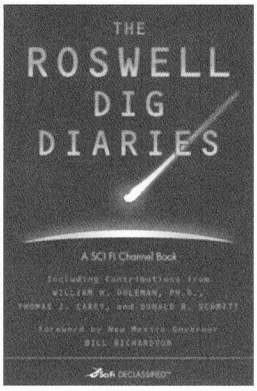
(continued on page 27)

DIGGING UP ROSWELL

BY ROBERT DURANT

Mike McAvennie, ed., *The Roswell Dig Declassified.* New York: Pocket Books, 2004. 265p. $14.95.

Depending on who tells the story, the debris found on the J. B. Foster ranch by Mack Brazel covered an area of three-quarters of a mile in length by two to three hundred feet in width (Maj. Marcel), or a grand total of 20 feet in diameter (Lt. Col. Sheridan Cavitt). For intermediate sizes, see the testimony of Brazel to his son, which wildly conflicts with the testimony attributed to his father in a newspaper account. And for further confusion, see the divergent testimony of Walt Whitmore Jr. and Brazel's daughter, Bessie, both of whom claim to have visited the site.



As to the nature of the debris, testimony is similarly divergent. Some describe paper, foil, rubber, and sticks, all easily identifiable components of the Project Mogul balloon arrays. Others speak of materials that have no plausible connection with Mogul, and in fact have properties that can't be reproduced with today's technology. At one end of this spectrum is Marcel with his conclusion that the material was "not of this Earth." At the other, Cavitt's sworn statement that what he found was a single radar reflector and its attendant deflated rubber balloon.

Oh, if only we could fire up our Time Machine and skim back and over to that 1947 hardscrabble semidesert vastness of the Foster ranch!

In September 2002, the Sci Fi Channel tried the next best thing. They hired William Doleman, Ph.D., of the University of New Mexico's Office of Contract Archeology, to do a systematic dig. In 1989, CUFOS had mounted an ad hoc survey (Mark Rodeghier, "Roswell, 1989," *IUR,* Sept./Oct. 1989, pp. 4–8, 23), but the Doleman dig was accomplished using the highest standards of professional archaeology.

The Roswell Dig Diaries is an account of the expedition, gathering emails, letters, official documents, scientific reports and even diaries kept by the principals and volunteers. It moves along remarkably quickly, with the tone and tension of a mystery novel. Will the "mystery metal" be found? Or, will fragments of an ancient radar target be left on the one-eighth-inch mesh sifting screens? Eagerly we turn the pages.

Here are portions of Doleman's application for a permit from the Bureau of Land Management:

> This testing plan describes field and laboratory methods for a program of remote sensing and limited archeological testing to investigate a 300-ft. by 0.75 mile area for the purposes of detecting physical evidence of a low-angle extraterrestrial vessel impact in 1947. . . .
>
> The project's investigative strategy entails using (1) non-destructive remote sensing techniques and (2) standard archeological subsurface testing methods to search for physical evidence of a vessel impact. Two possible kinds of evidence are anticipated. The first is evidence of the impact in the form of actual modification to the original ground surface caused by the vessel impacting at a low angle, reportedly producing a "gouge" or "furrow" in the land surface. This furrow may have been filled in through natural erosion and deposition processes during the 55 years that have passed since the impact is thought to have taken place. The second kind of possible evidence is a "debris field" that was reportedly produced by the impact, and associated partial disintegration and scattering of portions of the vessel's exterior. Much of this material was apparently removed within a few days of the impact, but some material may have been missed and been subsequently buried by natural processes, including erosion, deposition, and bioturbation.

So Doleman wasn't shy about the nature of the undertaking. The test pits were planned to be dug by 12 volunteers promised by the Roswell UFO Museum. But only six showed up, a serious manpower deficit halving the amount of digging. This proved to be hard labor, digging with trowels—not picks and axes—and then meticulously sifting the loose soil, and then repeating the process throughout the very hot days. One of the volunteers was Nancy Easley Johnston, daughter of Maj. Edwin Easley, Provost Marshal (chief of police) at Roswell Field in July 1947. Her interest in the dig flows from her father's deathbed use of the word "creatures" when describing the events at Roswell.

In addition to the multitude of test pits and trenches, Doleman hired a contractor to provide state-of-the-art ground electromagnetic conductivity and high-resolution metal

detection surveys. This equipment was probably sensitive enough to find metallic debris buried fairly close to the surface, and was chosen "on the basis of the anticipated properties of the evidence being sought."

A backhoe was brought in, no mean feat considering how remote the site is. Moreover, the backhoe operator had worked with Doleman and other archeologists on many digs, and had a reputation for a very fine hand and a feel for soil discontinuities. While the sifting of test pits looked for artifacts, the backhoe would provide cross-sections of the trench. Compression of the soil by an object heavy enough to form the trench should be evident upon inspection of the backhoe work. Finally, aerial photos made of the area in 1946, 1954, and 1966 were found. These proved sufficient to draw some conclusions.

One surprise was the documentation of how rapidly, even in this dry country, erosion works to erase surface details. "No linear trace that is visible in the 1954 aerial photographs, but is not visible in the 1946 photographs, was found during inspection of the aerial photography. Thus, no evidence of a furrow-like feature that was present in 1954, but not in 1946, was detected in the aerial photograph study." But "it seems quite possible that the shallow 'furrow' described by eyewitnesses in July 1947 could have been erased in the six and a half years that passed between then and February 1954, when the 'post-event' photograph was taken. Furthermore, the 55 years that passed between 1947 and 2002 may have been more than sufficient time to obscure, or even completely erase much or all of the 'furrow' described by eyewitnesses." And "surface features as deep as 10–20 cm might easily have become completely obscured during the 55 years that passed between 1947 and 2002."

Doleman's writing, whether in his emails or his formal reports, is always meticulous and conservative. Before anyone leaps to a conclusion about the ultimate worth of this project, he should consider how Doleman summarized it: "The project's methodology qualifies as archeological *testing* rather than full *excavation*, because the investigation was limited in scope and designed to evaluate the site's potential, rather than to examine phenomena known from visible surface evidence, which is lacking at the site."

The result of all this is typical of Roswell inquires in general. No smoking gun was found. On the other hand, a small number of artifacts of unknown provenance were discovered. Moreover, there are soil deformation anomalies in the trench area that remain puzzling. All parties left with the conviction that more field work was necessary. In Doleman's words, "The project sought to uncover remnants of the two most commonly reported kinds of physical evidence: a furrow and unusual debris. No conclusive evidence of either was found, but two furrow candidates were discovered and should be further investigated. In addition, a number of unidentified items warranting forensic analysis were also recovered."

What are these unidentified artifacts? What is the likely origin of the strange ground formations that seem consistent with the shape and soil characteristics of a "vessel impact"? Maddeningly, the book ends without a word on the results of the elaborate expedition. Thus the furrow lays untouched by the experts, and the artifacts sit in a vault.

Worth the price of the book is the foreword by Bill Richardson, Governor of New Mexico, and one of the most experienced and admired politicians and bureaucrats on today's scene. Richardson was on John Kerry's short list of potential vice-presidential candidates. Coming from such a source, in the cultural context where most politicians would rather be poked in the eye with a stick than support the idea that there might be something other than balloons and radar-reflector kites to the Roswell story, this is quite astonishing. Here is what Richardson writes:

> To many Americans and many people around the world, Roswell, New Mexico, carries a special meaning. For a wide variety of reasons, Roswell represents a place where something—an extraterrestrial spaceship, according to some, a sophisticated weather balloon to others—crashed in July 1947.
>
> The mystery surrounding this crash has never been adequately explained—not by independent investigators, and not by the U.S. government. In 2002, using the latest high-tech tools, scientists from the University of New Mexico initiated an archeological dig sponsored by the SCI FI Channel to help determine what crashed into the desert near Roswell.
>
> Using all of the tools and capabilities of modern science, we need to get to the bottom of something that has perplexed millions of Americans, and others, for more than fifty-seven years. The mystery surrounding the Roswell crash has become a fixture of American culture. It has been the focus of dozens of books, documentaries, TV specials and movies. There are as many theories as there are official explanations.
>
> Clearly, it would help everyone if the U.S. government disclosed everything it knows. Openness is our best policy. The American people can handle the truth —no matter how bizarre or mundane. And after more than fifty-five years, every government document on the Roswell incident should be released to the public. With full disclosure and our best scientific investigation, we should be able to find out what happened on that fateful day in July 1947.

Already the organized skeptics have enlisted the usual journalists to deride Richardson, who is only stating the obvious, which is that whatever happened at Roswell, it is unlikely to be settled by the government's "case closed" statements. Richardson is correct when he says millions of Americans don't buy that explanation. Nor do the great majority of those who have studied the issue with care. And rather than being demeaned, the collaboration of funders like Sci Fi Channel with institutions like the University of New Mexico, operating with the blessing of political leaders like Richardson, should be applauded. ✦

First contact with ET within 20 years?

BY MARK RODEGHIER

Physical scientists are not renowned for being humble, and they love to make predictions (and bets with each other about their predictions). Developing a theory that allows one to make accurate predictions about the physical universe is the *sine qua non* of success in physics or astronomy.

So it should come as no surprise to students of science that Seth Shostak, the SETI Institute's senior astronomer and director, recently predicted that advances in computer power and radio telescope technology will make it likely that we will detect the radio transmissions of alien civilizations within the next 20 years. Shostak's predictions are to be published in the journal *Acta Astronautica* (look for it on your newsstand), and are based on our own technological potential plus the likelihood of advanced ETI civilizations.

Shostak estimates that there are between 10,000 and 1,000,000 civilizations in the galaxy that *could* be transmitting via radio. This estimate is consistent with other estimates made by Frank Drake, Carl Sagan, and other SETI scientists, and has changed surprisingly little over the last 40 years despite our vastly increased knowledge of such things as solar system and planetary formation, the hazards posed by gamma-ray bursters, and the process of evolution here on Earth.

The radio telescopes devoted to SETI searches will soon be greatly upgraded, so Shostak can estimate, based on this increased capability, plus continued improvements in computing power, how long it will take to comprehensively search all potential stellar systems in our general neighborhood in the galaxy. Given the density of alien civilizations and these search plans, he then predicts that within about 20 years we can detect signals from at least one ETI civilization, which will likely be between 200 and 1,000 light years distant.

How seriously should we take this prediction? Well, his forecast is based on three general factors: the number of advanced aliens, their likelihood to be broadcasting a radio signal, and terrestrial detection technology. On the last factor, Shostak is certainly on firm ground. Like all technology, the telescopes and computers used by SETI have been rapidly improving, and will continue to do so within the foreseeable future. But on the alien-related factors, Shostak is on much shakier ground, as even his fellows believe.

For example, Paul Shuch, executive director of the SETI League, is quoted in the July 23, 2004, *New Scientist* magazine as stating, "predicting the date, the decade or even the century of contact is another matter because the 'other end' of the communications link is completely out of our hands. It would be nice to think we know something about the existence, distribution, technology and motivation of our potential communications partners in space, but in fact, we don't." There are, for example, many responsible scientists who believe that ETI civilizations are quite uncommon in the galaxy (see Peter D. Ward and Donald Brownlee's *Rare Earth,* Springer-Verlag-Telos, 2000, for a well-developed argument to this effect). If so, this makes the probability of detection much lower than Shostak estimates.

Even more uncertain, in my judgment, is the behavior of these purported aliens. For what length of time a civilization uses radio technology to communicate—in a form that leaks sufficiently into space—is, to say the least, unknown and really inestimable, as is the chance that aliens will directly transmit radio waves to announce their existence.

Shostak understands this, but he still defends his prediction. As he told the reporter from *New Scientist*, "I have made this prediction using the assumptions adopted by the SETI research community itself." That, though, is no defense at all. Just because it has been an article of faith (and that is the appropriate term) in the SETI community doesn't make something good science. Shostak wouldn't accept the arguments of UFO researchers if we appealed to "assumptions adopted by the UFO research community itself," so we are under no obligation to accept his.

I will be thrilled if the SETI effort succeeds in detecting a signal from aliens, as it will be one of the greatest discoveries in history. Such a detection by definition can only happen once in mankind's history, just as our first face-to-face contact with ETs can only happen once, and it would be exciting to be alive when it occurs. So in some respects, I hope Shostak is right (although I might be willing to bet a modest sum against him). And although SETI searches have been undertaken since about 1960, they have for the most part been intermittent and under funded (though with much,

Mark Rodeghier is scientific director of the J. Allen Hynek Center for UFO Studies in Chicago.

much more support than UFO investigation). So the increase in SETI capability in the next few years will make current search efforts a good deal more effective, and more stars will be searched in the next 20 years than in the previous years combined.

I guess we will just have to wait to see whether Shostak's prediction is vindicated by events, although our knowledge of various relevant astronomical conditions (such as planetary system formation) is developing so rapidly that Shostak may feel compelled to modify his estimate before too long.

I'm not foolhardy enough to conjecture when we will first meet aliens face-to-face. Or, at least, to predict an *open* face-to-face meeting. After all, plenty of people believe that many humans have already met or interacted with aliens during the past 50 years. No landing on the White House lawn, but lots of landings on vacant lots, farmer's fields, and highways. Figuring out alien psychology and motives is a difficult task; our SETI friends may have the same trouble when the first signal is received. ✦

HAS SETI@HOME FOUND A SIGNAL?

An article in *New Scientist* magazine for September 1, 2004, entitled " Mysterious Signals from 1000 Light Years Away," implies that the UC Berkeley SETI@home project has uncovered a very convincing candidate signal that might be the first strong evidence for extraterrestrial intelligence.

Alas, this story is misleading. According to Dan Werthimer, who heads up the UC Berkeley SERENDIP SETI project, this is a case of a reporter failing to understand the workings of their search. He says that misquotes and statements taken out of context give the impression that his team is exceptionally impressed with one of the many candidate signals, SHGb02+14a, uncovered using the popular SETI@home software. They are not.

This signal has been found twice by folks using the downloadable screen saver. That fact resulted in the UC Berkeley team putting it on their list of "best candidates." Keep in mind that SETI@home produces 15 million signal reports each day. How can one possibly sort through this enormous flood of data to sift out signals that might be truly extraterrestrial, rather than merely noise artifacts or man-made interference?

The scheme used is simple in principle (although the technical details are complex): SETI@home data come from a receiver on the Arecibo radio telescope that is incessantly panning the sky, riding "piggyback" on other astronomical observations. Every few seconds, it sweeps another patch of celestial real estate, and records data covering many millions of frequency channels. Some of these data are then distributed for processing by the screen saver. By chance, the telescope will sweep the same sky patch every six months or so. If a signal is persistent—that is to say, it shows up more than once when the telescope is pointed at the same place, and at the same frequency (after correction for shifts due to the motion of the Earth)—then it becomes a candidate. Of course, being persistent doesn't mean that the source is always on, only that it is found multiple times.

In February of this year, Werthimer and his colleagues took a list of 200 of the best SETI@home candidate signals to Arecibo and deliberately targeted that mammoth antenna in the directions to which the scope was pointed when they were found. Once subjected to this closer inspection, all but one of these signals failed to show. That disqualifies them from being claimed as true detections of a persistent signal. The one that was found again, SHGb02+14a (the subject of the *New Scientist* article), will no doubt be observed yet again, but according to Paul Horowitz, who heads up the Harvard SETI efforts, the statistics of noise make it fairly likely that at least one of the candidates observed in February would reappear, even if all these signals were simply due to receiver fluctuations.

The article remarks on the strong drift of this signal, which it describes as puzzling. Of course, many terrestrial sources of interference, and in particular telecommunication satellites, show strong drifts due to changing Doppler effects as they wheel across the sky. (Incidentally, the technically inclined will want to note drift due to a planet rotating like Earth would be 0.15 Hz/sec, not the 1.5 Hz/sec mentioned in the magazine.) As for the distance of 1000 light-years claimed in the article's title, there is clearly no evidence supporting this number, other than the lack of known nearby stars in the beam.

The bottom line is that an experiment like SETI @home always has a candidate list, a table of those signals that look most promising. Indeed, you can find the current versions of this list on their website (setiathome.ssl.berkeley.edu/). However, there is a great deal of difference between a candidate and a convincing signal. If any of the major SETI experiments being run by the SETI Institute, by the UC Berkeley group, the folks at Harvard, or the Australians or Italians, discovers a signal that they think is of extraterrestrial origin, they will immediately take steps to confirm this, both with their own scientists and with observers at other organizations. You will find information about it on their websites, and in multiple media outlets.

Sadly, the *New Scientist*, while it implies that a detection of an extraterrestrial signal is imminent, has inadvertently wandered into a sticky vat of hyperbole.—*Seth Shostak, The SETI Institute, September 2, 2004.*

LETTERS

RECENT MINNESOTA SIGHTING

To the editor:

Every year during September and October I haul sugar beets for farmers in the Clara City, Minnesota, area. In September 2003, around 10:30 a.m., I was waiting on a gravel road crossroads for the farmer to show up with the lifter to come into the field. I wasn't sure which field he meant, so I sat up on the truck box watching the surrounding fields with binoculars.

Eventually getting tired of sitting on the edge of the box, I entered the cab and continued to watch the fields. After a while, to alleviate boredom, I trained my binoculars on the waxing half-moon, visible high in the sky. It was about 60 to 70 degrees azimuth and pale in the sky, with some wispy cirrus clouds way up high. Visibility was excellent.

As I was gazing at the mountains on the edge of the moon, a passenger jet passed my field of vision. I watched it for a while, clearly observing the engines, the wings, tail wings, and contrails, as it headed northwest. Every five seconds or so, I had to shift my binoculars to keep the aircraft in the middle of the vision field. After a minute or so, no more, I trained the binoculars (7x power) on the moon again and idly enjoyed the spectacle of the moon's varied landscape.

Suddenly, a round, black craft intruded itself in the field of vision. It was much higher than the passenger jet, but still below the high cirrus clouds. As big as this capital O, with no contrail, it was perfectly round and clearly defined, without wings or projections. It could have been either saucer-shaped as seen from the bottom, or a spherical object.

Traveling in a straight line from southeast to northwest, it did not deviate in the time I watched it (10 to 12 seconds). I had to move my binoculars all the while to keep it in focus, as was not the case with the passenger jet where I could move the binoculars every five seconds or so to keep it in the focus. The passenger jet, which must have been traveling about 500 mph, was 30,000 feet or so in altitude. The black craft I estimated at from 40,000 to 50,000 (it passed below the high cirrus clouds). Figuring the distance it traveled as I watched, I estimated the speed to be between 3,000 to 5,000 mph.

As I watched and moved my binoculars, the truck mirror got in the way, and I lost sight of the object. Once lost, there was no hope of picking it up again.

One other thing I noticed was that as the object moved and increased its angle to me, the shape remained spherical. This suggested to me that it must indeed be a sphere.

What did I see? Obviously a manufactured object, obviously a flying craft, obviously capable of great speed, and obviously nothing that we have unveiled yet. In my opinion, it was a top-secret U.S. aircraft. It was just serendipity that it happened to cross the vision field of my binoculars. Even if a potential observer had known where and when to look, the object would have been invisible to the unaided eye.

Arthur A. Larson
Canby, Minnesota

TRIBUTE TO TIMMERMAN

To the editor:

Nice bio by Mark Rodeghier on John Timmerman in the Winter *IUR*. Like John, I date my first interest in the UFO enigma from Kenneth Arnold's reported sighting in 1947. Also like John at the time, I was in college after military service.

Unlike John, though, my pursuit since has been a largely passive armchair activity. I did interact with him on a couple of peripheral analyses for CUFOS in the 1980s. (More recently I have modestly served the cause by fielding some email duties for MUFON.)

From my passive vantage point, I can deeply appreciate the time, effort and expense John has invested in the goals of CUFOS and dissemination of UFO knowledge in general. I'm sure many inner details of his dedication were not generally known before your *IUR* bio.

He (with Margaretha) rates generous kudos from the entire community. It's good to note his intention to still lend a hand upon occasion.

Robert H. Coddington
Richmond, Virginia

✦

RECENT UFO REPORTS

August 28, 10:11 p.m. Tapachula, Chiapas, Mexico. A circular metallic UFO the size of an airliner, accompanied by six luminous spheres, were seen over the Pemex oil refinery at an altitude of about 1,000 meters. The larger craft performed erratic maneuvers at high speed.

September 12, evening. San Francisco, Calif. Laura Simmons, on Fulton Street, saw "a silent, abstract blob almost like the underside view of a manta ray shape, moving quickly, quietly across the sky." She described the UFO as "very large, almost gossamer, sprinkled with lights but almost like dusted with a luminous powder."

September 17, 3:39 a.m. Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario. Eyewitness A.S. woke up to a strange humming sound and lights shining through the window. She ran outside and saw a large object "shaped like a large submarine but with tons of lights everywhere. The bottom of it looked like a star field, and it had beams of light shining down the middle of it, in a straight line from one end to the other. I couldn't tell which end was the front or back." She heard a loud thunderclap and the object rose higher until it was lost to sight.—*Reports from Joseph Trainor's UFO Roundup, Sept. 8 and 22, 2004.*

SATELLITE OBJECTS—*continued from page 10*

January 13, 1997, Abbottsford, British Columbia. A woman was heading for work in Chilliwack when she noticed a white, fluffy cloud in an otherwise perfectly clear sky. She was amazed when the cloud "burst downwards" with a bright white light, three times consecutively. After the additional portions of the cloud dissipated, what was left behind was a black bar. After five minutes, a solid stream of bright white light came downwards from the black bar, and then there were two black bars. The second one was slightly smaller and about 45 degrees below the first one. The bars retained their relative position to each other, but started moving east in a wavy motion. She lost sight of them when she got off the freeway at the Sardis exit. Later that morning about 11:00 a.m., two men making a delivery arrived at her workplace and described seeing, at the same location, a glowing cloud that was expanding and contracting at the bottom.

April 20, 1997, Sarnia, Ontario. At approximately 1:40 p.m., a woman was sitting on a park bench along the St. Clair River. Directly in front of her a grayish-white object suddenly appeared, suspended vertically in mid-air, with the bottom part of the object positioned at 25 degrees above the horizon. Port Huron, Michigan, was in the background, underneath the object, on the other side of the river. The object had a long tubelike shape, rounded at both ends and fuzzy or diffuse around the edges. She then noticed a white spherical object which seemed to have been discharged from the original object. This white sphere traveled a short distance northwards toward Lake Huron and vanished. The witness had the cigar-shaped object in view for another few seconds before it too disappeared.

Satellite-object reports remain, as I have demonstrated in this article, a compelling and mysterious component of the UFO phenomenon. Although not close encounters, they are strange and difficult to explain. Unlike most other UFO cases, they involve groups of UFOs acting in concert, which increases the anomalous nature of these reports and naturally raises the question of a possible intelligence behind the phenomenon. My view is that *if* a careful and honest look by science into the body of satellite-object reports were to take place, this could not but help play a major role in hastening the day when resolution to this mystery is finally achieved.

STILL SEARCHING

This article was written not only to inform *IUR* readers about a very important (and relatively neglected) area of the UFO problem, but hopefully to elicit information from the readers as well. Perhaps you may know of others who witnessed this type of event, or you were a witness yourself? Whatever information you can provide, please contact me at HerbUFO@aol.com. Confidentiality (if requested) will be honored. Receipt of any such information would be appreciated. ✦

MYSTERIOUS ISLAND—*continued from page 14*

illuminating to peruse the texts of the early folklorists and local story collectors who pieced these accounts together (as I did when studying these original records in the archives of the island museum at Douglas). To see one renowned researcher, decades before crop circles or UFOs entered public consciousness, comment in ways that we might easily do today was inspiring. This man, Walter Gill, noted that so many farms on the Curraghs and a few in other parts of Man had reported areas of swirled flattened crop—sometimes on the same night—that Gill wondered if they really thought this to be just one entity or if the fenoderee was a generic name for a collection of beings.

Popular opinion held that it was meant to be a single being, but how could he be so prolific in his extracurricular mowing activities? Much more likely, of course, the farmers were simply finding these swirled areas and, half in jest and half out of reverence to the power of Themselves, were remarking that the fenoderee must be their architect. Gill, like all the folklorists before him, was forced to speculate as to their meaning without the modern knowledge that we possess or the cultural reference point whereby these same phenomena are appearing and other, alien sources are now getting the blame.

The swirled crop patterns have all the hallmarks of modern circles. They formed around dawn, and when there was a witness nearby, he or she sometimes described a noise like a minitornado. One description of the fenoderee was stated thus: "the concentrated fury of his threshing resembled a whirlwind."

In an interview with an 18th-century folklorist named Train, a farmer stated that to keep watch and protect their fields from the uninvited swirling activities of the fenoderee, he and colleagues had developed a specific technique. They would start from the center of the field and do their mowing in a circular swirl so as to be able to produce mown crop while maximizing vigilance for uninvited supernatural guests. The result, of course, was a circular swath of crop.

POSTSCRIPT

As a fitting place to end our look at this remarkable island, we note that it may have a second claim to fame to add to the UFO sighting depicted on its national flag. It could also be the only one to celebrate a UFO related mystery in a several-hundred-year-old folk song. Among its verses are these lines: "The fenoderee went to the meadow / To lift the dew at gray cock-crow, / The maiden-hair and the cattle-herb / He stamped them under both his feet. / He was stretching out on the ground of the meadow, / He threw the grass on the left hand . . . ."

This song could as easily have been written three centuries later about a phenomenon that has entranced both the UFO community and the general public. ✦

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Anne Arundel Community College, Arnold, Maryland (near Annapolis). Registration: $35. Program: 10:00 a.m., Peter Resta (keynote). 10:30 a.m., Dr. Tom Van Flandern (analysis of unusual images from Mars). 1:00 p.m., Capt. Robert Durant (Retired), "Roswell? Yes!" (analysis of crash at Roswell in 1947). 2:00-4:00 p.m., Rob and Sue Swiatek (FUFOR) UFOs. 4:00 p.m., Anna Jamerson (coauthor of *Connections: Solving our Alien Abduction Mystery*. For further informaton, contact Peter Resta, SPR100@aol.com.

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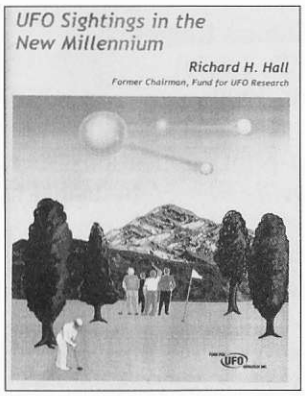

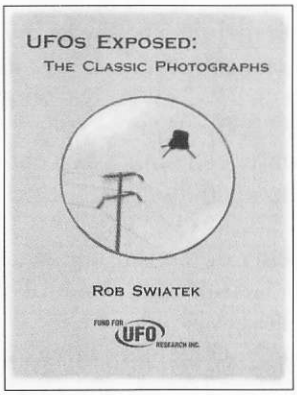

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SURPRISE!

Even readers in Tehran, Iran, are asking us about the LAURA PROJECT of CUFOS. Recently, our Mr. Norooz Rezazadeh wrote for the explanatory letter. YOU should again read page 27 in the Fall issue of *IUR*. We will assist you with many good suggestions if you mail your stamped return envelope today to our active LAURA Project, P.O.Box 1621, Lima, OH 45802-1621. The UFO Phenomenon needs a LAURA everywhere!!!

MARTIAN METHANE CONTROVERSY

Methane and water vapor are concentrated in three broad equatorial regions of the Martian atmosphere, say scientists studying data from Europe's Mars Express orbiter. The link may point to a common source—possibly life.

In March, scientists using the orbiter's Planetary Fourier Spectrometer (PFS) announced they had found methane in the atmosphere at a level of just 10.5 parts per billion. Two other groups say they have also detected the gas with telescopes in Chile and Hawaii.

Ultraviolet sunlight takes about 300 years to destroy atmospheric methane. These detections suggest the gas is being replenished on Mars by such processes as geothermal heating or by bacterial life forms.—*New Scientist* news service, September 21.

BALLOONS, MISSILES—*continued from page 20*

the truth about a crashed object somewhere in New Mexico. How else, really, could an environment be maintained that blatantly refused to focus on the balloon and rocket scientist sightings? Inside the Pentagon, both the Special Study Group of Stephan Possony and the CIA knew about McLaughlin and this evidence. But somehow, even at the Robertson Panel, it just all went away.

In 1954, in a talk in Los Angeles, the chairman of the Board of Directors of General Mills, Harry A. Bullis, "admitted" that the flying saucer scare was caused largely by their balloons.

Oh, well. Forget everything you've just read. ✦

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- ❑ *Examining the Earthlight Theory* (Greg Long) [study of the tectonic-strain theory of UFOs]
- ❑ *Near Miss with a UFO: Swissair Flight 127* (Don Berliner and Robert Durant, 1999)
- ❑ *The Cash-Landrum Incident* (John Schuessler, 1998)
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